WARREN MAGAZINE

EERIE #71

JAN 1976

THIS ISSUE: EXTERMINATOR! EXORCIST! POOTER and the MAGICMAN!

EERIE

$1.00

PDC

OUT OF A LAND OF MAGIC AND DREAMS...

ALSO: HUNTER II...THE LAST SURVIVOR OF MUTANT'S ALAMO!

EERIE No. 71 HALLOWEEN HORROR SPECIAL

ART: BERNI WRIGHTSON

OUR COVER
Goblin! A misfit demon. Trapped between fantasy and reality. And belonging to neither. Goblin. The frightened and the terrorized. Cover painting by Sanjulian!

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EERIE®

CONTENTS

ISSUE NO. 71
JANUARY 1976

4 **DEAR COUSIN EERIE** "Driven by his own personal desire for vengeance, Demian Hunter left the woman he came to love . . . to pursue a phantom of hatred. And there," writes Donna Mosley, "this tragic, vengeful hero was even less successful!"

5 **GOBLIN** Salem burst into this world through the cabinet of an old grandfather clock. A small, hideous demon trapped accidentally in reality, frightened and frightening, seeking desperately to escape. And having the very devil of a time managing it!

13 **HUNTER II: TIME** The goblin forces poured from the Eastern Mountains. To expand their territory. To take captives. Between one walled hamlet and the marauding goblin army stood two lone, reluctant heroes. Exterminator robot. And Karas/Hunter II!

23 **IRVING AND THE DEVILPIE** The sheriff killed Invincible Irving with a shotgun blast through the heart. But Irving didn't die. He went to a land of shadows where he acquired a demon, a life of wealth and leisure, and a special, private hell!

29 **POOTER and the MAGICMAN** Smithpooter was a magician. And, as such, he was a failure. His tricks didn't work. The fat lady ate his rabbit. He was scorned. Abused. Fired. Until the fatal day he made a deal with the demonic S. Pavlov-Freud!

37 **EL CID: DEMON TREASURE** The cache was guarded by a demon. So said the legends. But it was an old treasure . . . and even demons die. So, reasoned Aledo, it was guarded by reputation alone. And, to his regret, he decided to test his theory!

47 **MORDECAI MOONDOG** Seven spirits possessed the house. Seven portraits hung on the wall. Sigfried. Pieter. Ivar. Roald. Ilona. Tomas. Who was the 7th ghost? What secret linked them to this desolate manse? What madness did they share?

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Dear Cousin Eerie...

Publication of the all **Hunter** issue of EERIE #69 sharpens our recollections and reminds us that **Karas** is really Number **Two.** It shows a sharp comparison between **Karas** and the original **Hunter, Demian.**

Demian was a child conceived in rape. He was a half-breed and his demon ancestry did nothing to endear him to the surrounding human populace. He grew up solitary. Lonely. The only person who loved him was his human mother. And when she died, he was totally alone.

Karas, also, was orphaned at an early age. He remembers **Phalmark Phal** and **Hunter** only vaguely. He is the ward of **Mandragora**, the greatest wizard on the **White Council.** As such he is educated, wanting for nothing. He has been raised with kindness, wisdom, acceptance. And though he is a natural fighter, he is neither naturally warlike nor belligerent.

Demian Hunter, however, was hostile and full of hate, which is of little wonder considering the way he had been treated. He hated his demon-father most of all, and his saga was one of determined quest. He sought only vengeance against the looming figure who gave him the life he did not want.

Karas, like **Demian**, is on a mission of destruction. His quest is to slay the goblin-lord, **Yaust**. He hopes that this will stop the invasion of the **Goblin** hoardes and allow the **White Council** time to work the spell that will keep the world from dying. Yet **Karas** fights not from vengeance, but from necessity. And he does not go **alone!**

Demian worked and lived in solitude. Part of this was due to his demon ancestry. Part to simple learning experience. His life was harsh. And he was arrogant, driven by nature and by necessity. That he would try to blow up half the world to check the demon's progress was proof of his obsession.

The saga of **Demian Hunter** ended, in its own way triumphant, because in the end **Demian** forswore hate and embraced humanity. He could not kill his own father... and so was killed instead. And, as his father said, he "died like a demon, proudly... silently. But he was a man!"

Karas saga has yet to end. And I hope that is conclusion will be as satisfying in its own way, as was that of the original **Hunter's.**

BILL GILRAG
Bend, Ore.

The cover painting on EERIE #69 was lauded as "an exciting masterpiece by **Sanjulian.**" I, however, found it dull and uninspired.

The demons look as if they had been cast from bronze. They are static, unmoving statues.

I don't for an instant believe that **Hunter** could have spirited that demon with his sword, like a marshmallow, then waved him lightly over his head. Either human or demon flesh would give, or the sword would snap in two. Of course, the demon might have **jumped** on the sword... but it would have been a mighty leap for an immobile statue.

Finally, you'd think that a hero of **Hunter's** mettle would be able to keep his helmet on straight. It's slipping and it's going to fall off in the heat of battle.

In short, the next time **Warren** wants a **Hunter** cover, do it right. Ask **Ken Kelly.**

MARTIN McGEE
No address

The characterization of **Karas/Hunter II** as a determined, self-conscious and slightly reluctant hero, is enjoyable and different, thanks to **Budd Lewis'** genius for originality.

EERIE #69 gave us one very beautiful **Hunter** story in dazzling color. Please consider doing the same for **Hunter II.** And maybe next summer **Warren** can grant the "son of **Hunter**" an entire issue of his own, as well!

THOMAS G. TOBIE
Jefferson, Ohio

EERIE has taken another artist, given him a showcase magazine, and another masterpiece has resulted. I'm refering, of course, to **Paul Neary's** work in all-**Hunter** EERIE #69.

Neary's Hunter is as impressive, as was **Gonzalo Mayo's El Cid** special! **Totally!**

The writers of the **Hunter** tales did excellent jobs, also. But if **Hunter** had to die, he should at least have been given the chance to sire a son in **Phalmark Phal**... to carry on the family demon-killing tradition. (But now that I think about it, maybe he did. Wasn't **Phalmark Phal** where **Karas Hunter** was born?)

My major complaint centers around the **Sanjulian** cover. I would much prefered to have seen **Ken Kelly's** realistic action.

But my complaint is a minor one, and I want to congratulate **Warren Publishing** on another excellent issue of EERIE!

BRUCE ORIONI
Kings Park, N.Y.

I am an avid fan of the **Warren** magazines. And, as a great admirer of their quality, I buy each and every issue.

Therefore, I'm **furious** when I see an asinine summer reprint issue like EERIE #69... an entire issue wasted on stories I've already **read!**

I suggest **Warren stop** republication of old material. That practice might save **you** money... but it makes **me** and **other** readers **cheated.**

ALAN NORDMARK
Dalton, Penn.

Karas and Demian wear the same helmet. But their outlook is different. Karas does what necessity dictates. Demian Hunter was driven. Compulsive. Full of vengeance!

EERIE #69, featuring **Hunter's** origin story and subsequent adventures was fabulous, fascinating reading.

His life was sad and fraught with hardship and denial. He was even forced by his quest for vengeance to leave the woman to whom he had given his heart. It seems that poor **Hunter** was not much more successful in destruction than love, however. For in the end, he could not even destroy his own hated father.

Hunter was a great, vengeful, tragic hero! So how could **Warren** kill him off?

Sure, **Karas/Hunter II** is around. But somehow, he just isn't the same.

Please, revive **Hunter.**

DONNA MOSLEY
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Rich Margopoulos' rendition of **Hunter's** origin was spectacular. Somehow he and artist **Paul Neary** managed to convey the emotions, as well as the facts, involved in the **Hunter** saga.

I felt utter horror as **Demian's** mother was raped by the Demongeneral. A rape that resulted in the birth of the "Demon Spawn."

With art and words, writer and artist managed to convey the affection that Demian's mother felt for her son, in spite of his origin.

The enormity of **Hunter's** loss at his mother's death, was so moving my eyes misted. Loneliness was conveyed when **Hunter** the half-breed was forced to seek refuge in the mountains because of his strangeness. And I felt happiness when he found his niche, and a use for his special talents... as a demon killer for the cavalry.

With simple words and art, **Margopoulos** and **Neary** have made a half-human comic book hero come alive. They have made him laugh, cry, love, hate.

And they have made the reader **care.**

LOUIS GRIFTY
New Orleans, La.

EERIE #69, featuring **Demian Hunter,** chronicled the entire saga of this great hero of the future. And it was delightful!

I had missed most of the books containing the original **Hunter** (series), and was glad to be able to read the saga in one exciting magazine.

It gave a feeling of continuity that was missing when read story by story in separate issues!

RAY MUNOA
San Mateo, Calif.

opinions? write...!

DEAR COUSIN EERIE
c/o Warren Publishing
145 E. 32nd Street
New York, N.Y. 10016

GOBLIN

STORY: BUDD LEWIS / ART: JOSE ORTIZ

MARIETTA WELDON-BENCHFIELD DRESSED FOR THE EVENING MEAL IN HER BEDCHAMBERS. NOTHING IN HER GENTLE WORLD WAS OUT OF ORDER.

EXCEPT SOMETHING THAT DISTANTLY TROUBLED HER. IT WASN'T A LARGE THING, IT WAS... OH! THE ANTIQUE CLOCK HAD CEASED TICKING. ITS SOOTHING SOUND WAS ABSENT.

PERHAPS SHE HAD FORGOTTEN TO WIND THE LOVELY CLOCK. SHE OPENED THE DOOR TO ADJUST THE CLOCK'S WEIGHTS...
AH, POOR OLD DEAR. I HAVEN'T BEEN GIVING YOU ENOUGH ATTENTION, HAVE I?

...WHEN SUDDENLY...!
EEEEIIIIIIII
AAGCHHHH!

ROOOGGEERRR! AEEEEE!
STOP! PLEASE! COME BACK HERE!

MPHH MMA... PHHHHM
I MEAN YOU NO HARM! QUIET! YOU'LL HAVE THE KING'S ARMY ON ME! STOP SCREAMING!

MRS WELDON BENCHFIELD WAS PERHAPS THE FIRST PERSON TO HAVE SEEN THE LITTLE CREATURE. BUT SHE NEVER SPOKE OF THE MEETING.
FOR WITH HIS MAGIC THE GOBLIN SIMPLY ERASED HER MOUTH FROM THE WOMAN'S FACE.

MARIETTA! WHAT'S WRONG, DARLI··! GOD!

WHAT INSANITY IS THIS?! GET AWAY FROM HER, YOU HIDEOUS BEAST! I'LL KILL YOU!
WAIT! HOLD! I MEANT NOTHING! NOTHING! PLEASE!

PLEASE! I WAS BUT SEARCHING FOR A DOOR! SHE WAS AFRAID ... SCREAMED! I HAD TO··!
PAM!

YRRRRR
CRASH

WHAT DID IT DO TO YOU? WHAT DID IT DO? OH GOD, GOD, GOD.

NO... PLEASE... DON'T HURT... WHAT?

WHAT? WHAT IS THIS PLACE? WHO ARE--!
HEY NOW. DON'T BE AFRAID. YOU'RE SAFE NOW. IN MY HOUSE. YOU'VE BEEN SHOT. YOU BE STILL AND I'LL CARE FOR YOU.

SEE? I DON'T KNOW WHO OR... WHAT YOU ARE, BUT YOU WERE HURT.
HURT? YES. HIS MAGIC WAS VERY EXPLOSIVE.

H-HEY! THE BULLET HOLE'S GONE! H-HOW YOU DO THAT?
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO HEAL MYSELF. NOTHING TO IT, REALLY.

WELL, IT SEEMS I HAVE A FRIEND IN YOU. MY NAME IS SALEM. I'M... I'M NOT OF YOUR WORLD. I'M RATHER LOST AND I'M TRYING TO GET HOME. IF THERE WERE TIME, I'D EXPLAIN...!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN. IF YOU'RE LOST, THEN WE'LL GO TO FATHER POOLEN. HE'LL HELP YOU FIND YOUR WAY HOME.
WELL... PERHAPS. BUT IT TAKES A SPECIAL DOOR TO OPEN BACK TO MY WORLD. A VERY SPECIAL DOOR.

NO ONE'S AROUND, SALEM. QUICKLY... LET'S GO IN!
I DON'T BELIEVE I SHOULD BE DOING THIS. PERHAPS I'D BEST GO.
SHH. COME.

I'M STRANGE AND HORRIBLE TO YOU... TO ALL PEOPLE. I AM CHASTISED EVERYWHERE I SEARCH. ONE DAY I'LL FIND THE DOOR BACK INTO MY WORLD. BUT--!
BUT WHY WOULD I WANT TO HELP YOU? I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE YOU'LL TAKE ME TO YOUR WORLD WITH YOU.

THERE'S FATHER NOW! FATHER! WE'VE COME TO--!
LORD! A DEMON HAS COME INTO THE HOUSE OF GOD!

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, I ADJURE THEE, DEMON!
NO! FATHER, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! HE'S NO DEMON!

GET AWAY FROM ME IDIOT! I AM NO DEMON! I AM GOBLIN! GOBLIN! AND I ONLY WANT TO BE GONE FROM THIS TWISTED WORLD OF FOOLS! STAY BACK!

THREATEN NOT THE MIGHT OF THY LORD THY GOD! BEHOLD THE WRATH OF THE CREATOR!

TAKE YOUR GOD AND GO TO HELL! BEHOLD THE MAGIC OF THE GOBLIN!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND HELP... FATHER!
GIRL! COME WITH ME!

THERE! THERE'S THE BEAST NOW! AND ITS CAPTURED AN INNOCENT CHILD!
THESE IDIOTS! I... WE MUST ESCAPE THIS MADNESS!
YOU! STOP! I'LL FIRE!

GIVE A BARREL, BURT! OVER HIS HEAD!
BLAM!

SAALEEMM!
NO!

YOU! YOU RIPPED HER FACE OFF! NOW! HEAR ME! FREEZE!

NO... WE DIDN'T MEAN TO.
LIFT YOUR WEAPONS!

OH GOD, DON'T DO THIS.
POINT THEM AT EACH OTHER! NOW!

PLEASE!
PREPARE YOURSELVES TO...

...DIE!

I WOULD RATHER HAVE DIED THAN HAD THIS HAPPEN TO YOU. AFTER ALL YOU'VE DONE TO HELP ME. MY MAGIC CAN STOP THE PAIN, BUT I CAN NOT REPAIR THE DAMAGE. AT LEAST NOT WHILE I AM IN YOUR WORLD.

I'LL FIND A DOOR TO MY WORLD. I'LL TAKE YOU THROUGH WITH ME. THERE WE HAVE SUCH MAGIC TO COMMAND AS TO MAKE YOU THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF MORTAL WOMEN. COME WITH ME. BACK TO MY WORLD!

PLEASE... STOP!
HAVE YOU PAIN?
NO. NONE AT ALL. BUT LOOK! UP THERE!

WE CAN HIDE THERE FOR AWHILE. MAYBE FIND HELP. I'M SO TIRED. AFRAID.
WE'LL GO TO THIS PLACE.

HULLO? ANYONE? CAN ANYONE HELP?

HELP? YES, LITTLE MAN. HOW MAY I HELP?
THE GIRL SHE S HURT.

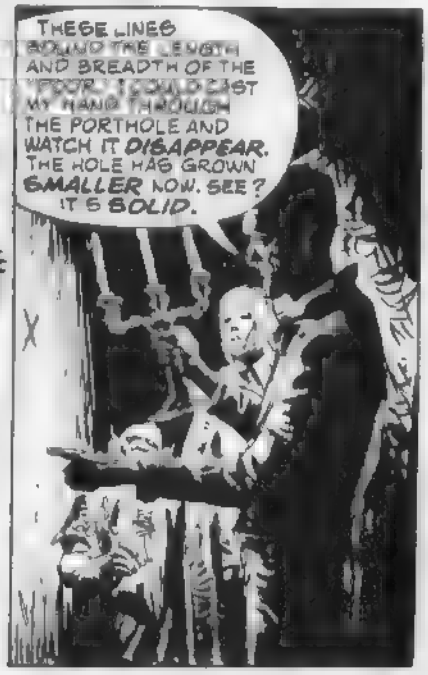
GIVE HER TO ME, MY STRANGE LITTLE FRIEND. I WILL TEND HER. BUT IN RETURN, YOU WILL ANSWER MY CURIOUSNESS.
JUST HELP HER, PLEASE

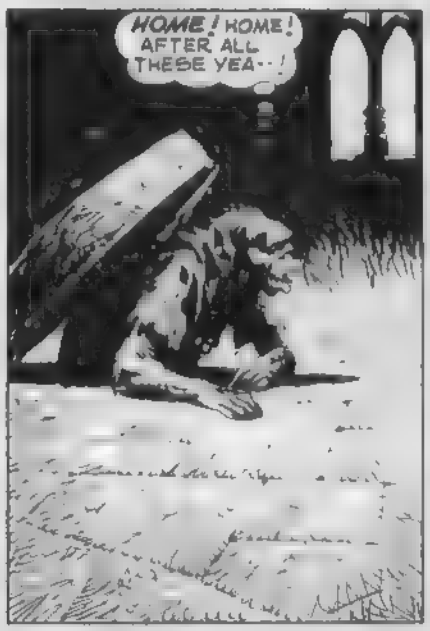
IT ISN'T YOUR FRIEND'S WOUNDS THAT TROUBLE ME. IT IS YOU THAT PUZZLES ME.
FIRST CLEAN BANDAGES THEN TO THE STUDY FOR BRANDY AND TALK, EH?
AS YOU WISH.

THUS WHEN I WENT TO RETURN HOME, THE DOORS I HAD LONG USED TRAVELING BETWEEN WORLDS WERE [illegible] I KNOW NOT WHY.
SO, LITTLE GOBLIN, YOU ARE LOST. I MYSELF, BELIEVE YOUR TALE. THIS VERY HOUSE IS BUILT ON STRANGE PROPERTIES. THREE CARPENTERS VANISHED DURING ITS CONSTRUCTION. COME TO THE CELLAR WITH ME, MY GOBLIN FRIEND.

ONCE I EVEN WATCHED MY OWN MOTHER WALK ACROSS THE CELLAR FLOOR AND DISAPPEAR!
I SEARCHED FOR HER FOR DAYS. AND FOR DAYS I HEARD HER WAILS AND PITEOUS MOANING.

BUT SHE WAS GONE. FINALLY HER WHIMPERING DIED [illegible] ALSO, SHE WAS NO LONGER A PART OF THIS WORLD. SEE THESE CHALK MARKS? HERE THERE WAS "THE OPENING."


THESE LINES [illegible] THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE [illegible] I COULD CAST MY HAND THROUGH THE PORTHOLE AND WATCH IT DISAPPEAR. THE HOLE HAS GROWN SMALLER NOW. SEE? IT S SOLID.



PERHAPS HE DID FIND JUST A TOUCH OF MAGIC LEFT OVER THERE. BECAUSE SOMEHOW HE SENT IT BACK TO THE GIRL WHO CARED FOR HIM.

SHE WAS VERY LOVELY ALL HER LIFE AND SHE NEVER FORGOT THE LITTLE GOBLIN WHO WAS LOST AND DOOMED... IN TWO WORLDS.

EARTH SPINS, AND EACH REVOLUTION BRINGS IT CLOSER TO DEATH. YET, DEATH CAN BE PREVENTED. THE WHITE COUNCIL MUST WIELD A MIGHTY SPELL TO HALT EARTH'S ROTATION...TO THROW EARTH INTO A DIMENSION THAT HOLDS NO THREAT OF DOOM.

TIME in EXPANSION

YAUST, THE SORCERER, WOULD BAR THIS MAGICK, FOR HIS DELIGHT IS EARTH'S DESTRUCTION. HE WOULD KEEP HIS GOBLIN DOMAIN ALIVE BY SORCERY, AND WHEN THE REST OF THE WORLD HAD PERISHED, YAUST ALONE WOULD RULE!

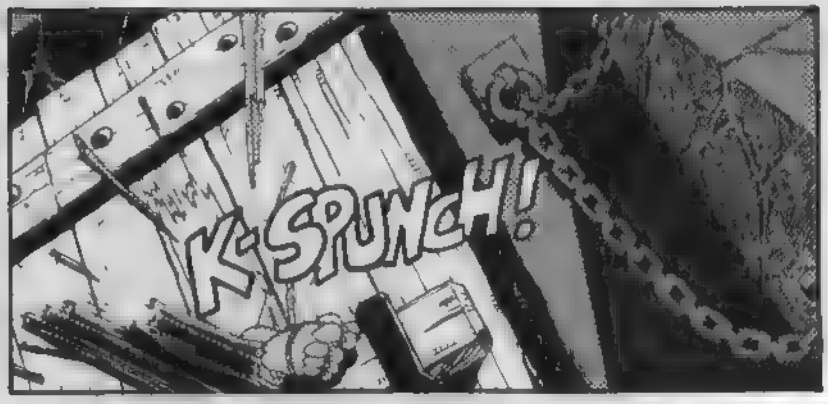
THREE PEOPLE OPPOSE YAUST'S PLAN FOR WORLD DOMINATION. A BOY. A GIRL AND A ROBOT, ON A MISSION TO SLAY THE DEADLIEST GOBLIN ON EARTH!

HUNTER II

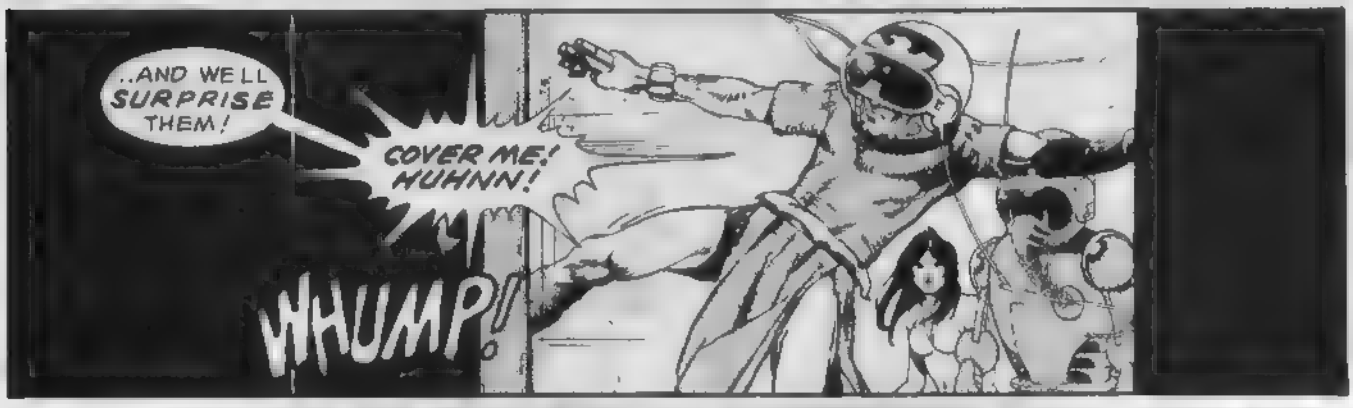
THE FOG LIFTED AND A GRIM FORTRESS ROSE BEFORE THE WEARY TRAVELERS...FESTOONED WITH EVEN GRIMMER ORNAMENTS. SPEARED, CRUCIFIED, GUTTED HUMAN BODIES.

STORY: BUDD LEWIS / ART: PAUL NEARY

SHE'S RIGHT! THE PLACE COULD BE FILLED WITH THE THINGS. GET READY FOR ANYTHING.
LET THEM GET READY!

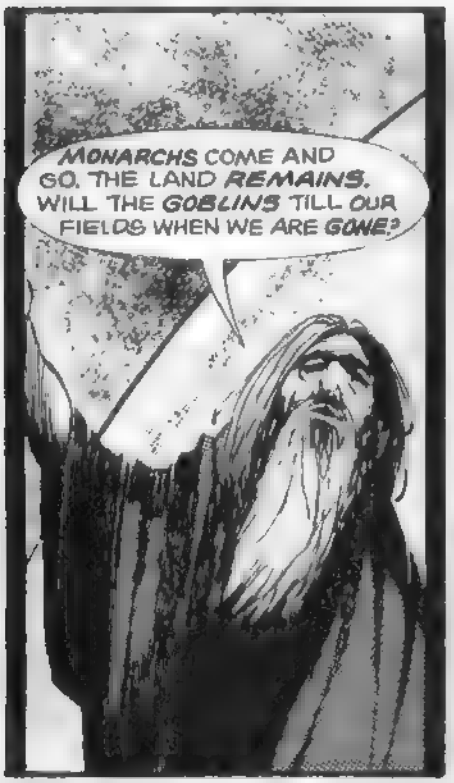

K-SPUNCH!

I HEAR A HUMAN VOICE. MANY VOICES! YET IT STILL MIGHT BE A TRAP!
THEN STAND ASIDE, ROBOT...


..AND WE'LL SURPRISE THEM!
COVER ME! HUHNN!
WHUMP!

HUNDREDS OF HUMAN HEADS TURN TO STARE AT THE INTRUDERS AS THEY ARE GREETED BY A DISMAL OLD PEASANT...
HO... STRANGERS! YET THEY MIGHT WELL BE GOBLINS! OH, WHAT IS TO BECOME OF US?

...AND INVITED FORWARD TO LISTEN TO THE EMOTIONAL HARANGUE OF ANOTHER!
YESTERDAY WE DEPOSED A KING. TOMORROW WE WILL HAIL A NEW ONE. FOR WE ARE FARMERS, AND GOBLINS HAMMER AT OUR DOORS WHO WILL DEFEND US NOW THAT OUR KING IS GONE?


MONARCHS COME AND GO. THE LAND REMAINS. WILL THE GOBLINS TILL OUR FIELDS WHEN WE ARE GONE?

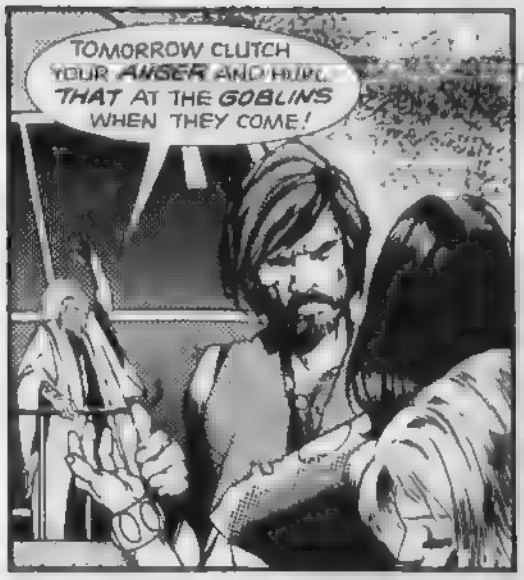
MANY OF YOU REBELLED AGAINST OUR KING'S AMBITION. YOU CALLED HIM WARLORD!
NOW, AT OUR BIDDING, HE IS GONE. IS THAT WARLORD AMBITION?

HE HAD DANCED AT YOUR WEDDINGS. BURIED YOUR DEAD. HE HAS WEPT WITH YOU!

YET A MORE COMPASSIONATE KING WOULD HAVE MELD HIS THRONE

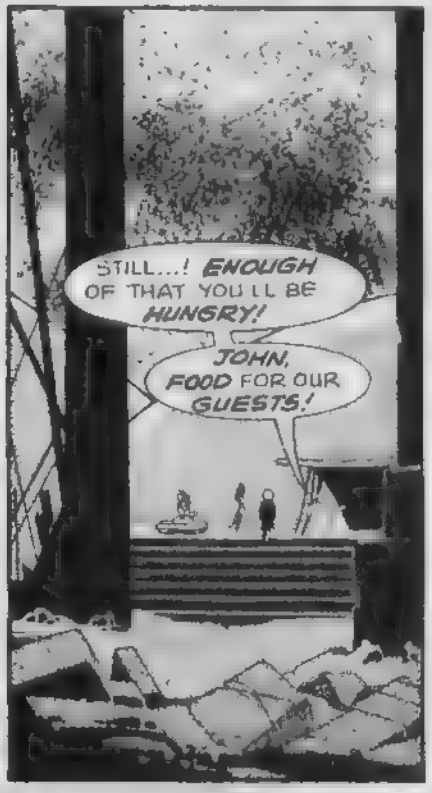
AND SAVED HIS PEOPLE FROM THE CARNAGE GOBLINS WREAKED HERE YESTERDAY!
PEASANTS SLAUGHTERED IN THEIR FIELDS AND HUNG OUT SIDE THE FORT LIKE SO MUCH CARRION!

NOW THE LAST OF THE KING'S RETAINERS RIDE OUT...
...AND THERE ARE THOSE OF YOU WHO MUTTER ANGRILY THAT IT IS FOR THE BEST!

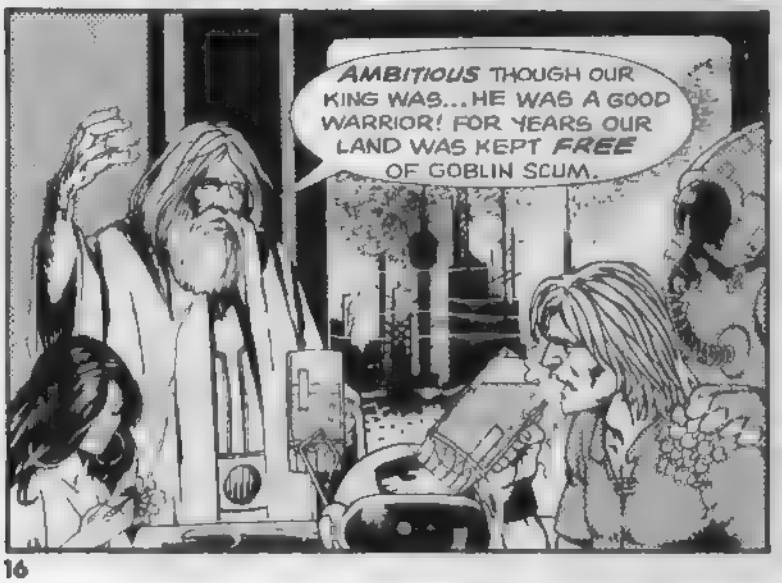

TOMORROW CLUTCH YOUR ANGER AND HURL THAT AT THE GOBLINS WHEN THEY COME!

I'VE LOVED THE KING SINCE HE WAS A BABE. I WATCHED HIM GROW.
OH, HOW COULD HE ABANDON HIS PEOPLE?
EVEN AT THEIR OWN BEHEST?

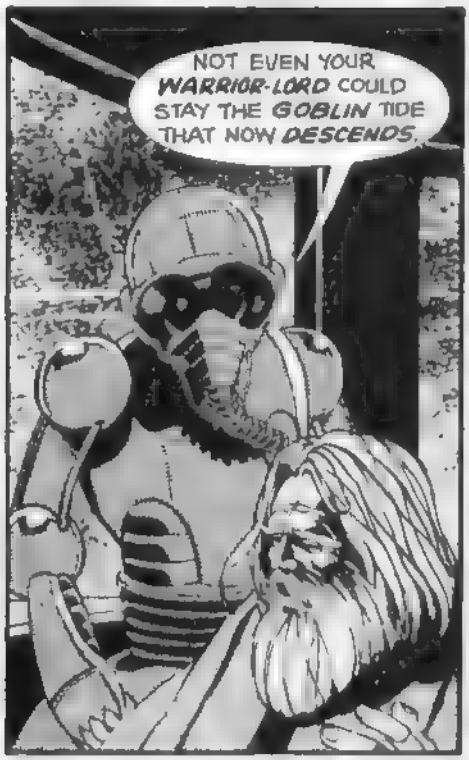
NO, STRANGER...THIS MAN COULD BE KING NO MATTER WHAT HIS PEOPLE SAID..
IF HE BUT CHOSE IT.

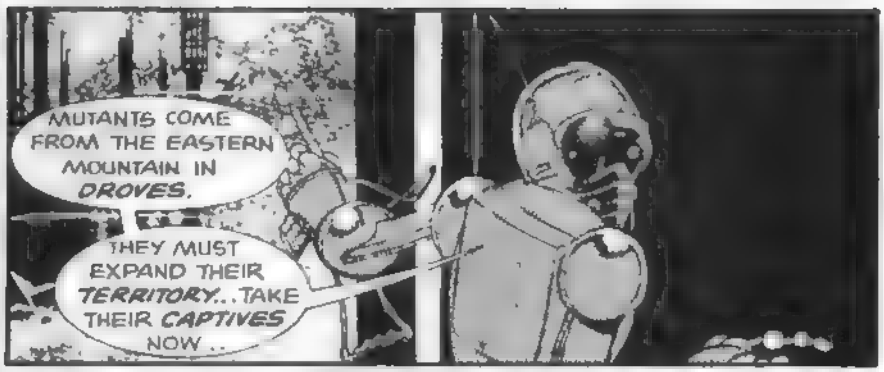

STILL...! ENOUGH OF THAT YOU'LL BE HUNGRY!
JOHN, FOOD FOR OUR GUESTS!

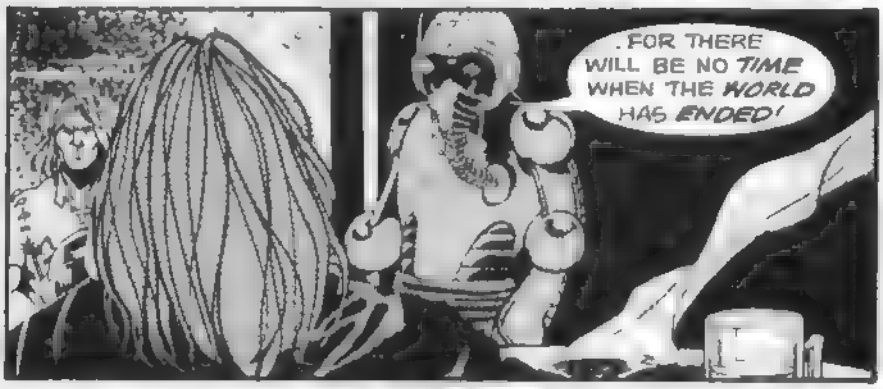
AND CAN I GET YOU ANYTHING, SIR?
THANKS, NO.


AMBITIOUS THOUGH OUR KING WAS...HE WAS A GOOD WARRIOR! FOR YEARS OUR LAND WAS KEPT FREE OF GOBLIN SCUM.

GOD ALONE KNOWS WHAT WILL BECOME OF US NOW THAT HE IS GONE!


NOT EVEN YOUR WARRIOR-LORD COULD STAY THE GOBLIN TIDE THAT NOW DESCENDS.


MUTANTS COME FROM THE EASTERN MOUNTAIN IN DROVES.
THEY MUST EXPAND THEIR TERRITORY... TAKE THEIR CAPTIVES NOW...


...FOR THERE WILL BE NO TIME WHEN THE WORLD HAS ENDED!

SUDDENLY
GOBLINS!
STAY BACK, GIRL!

AND EXTERMINATOR AND KARAS HUNTER ARE SURROUNDED BY SNARLING GOBLIN WARRIORS.
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
ASK ME LATER WHEN I...
...KNOW!

THE PEASANTS, OVERWHELMED BY THE FIERCE GOBLIN ONSLAUGHT, OFFER LITTLE RESISTANCE...
FIGHT! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU? FIGHT!

TELLING WON'T HELP! THEY'RE NOT TRAINED FIGHTERS... AND THEY HAVE NO LEADER!

WHERE ARE THESE ANIMALS GETTING IN FROM?

THEY'RE SCALING THE NORTH WALL! HUNTER! WE'VE GOT TO STOP THEM!
THESE PEASANTS AREN'T EVEN PUTTING UP A FIGHT!

THEY HAVE NO KING TO DIRECT THEM! THEY DON'T KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN!
IF WE CAN PLUG UP THAT HOLE, MAYBE WE CAN HANDLE THE ONES ALREADY INSIDE!

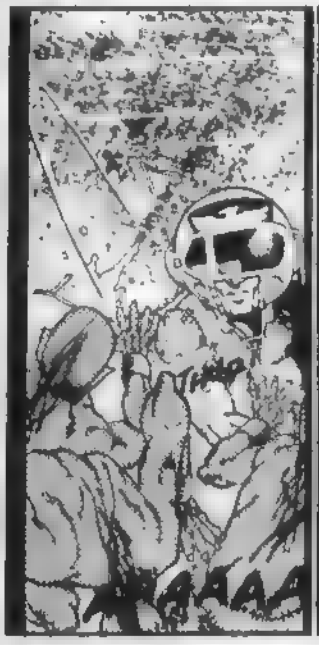
SSSSST!

BACK! BACK!
THAK!

EXTERMINATOR! WATCH THE LEDGE! IT'S CRUMBLING!

HUNTERRRRRRR!!!
CRASH!

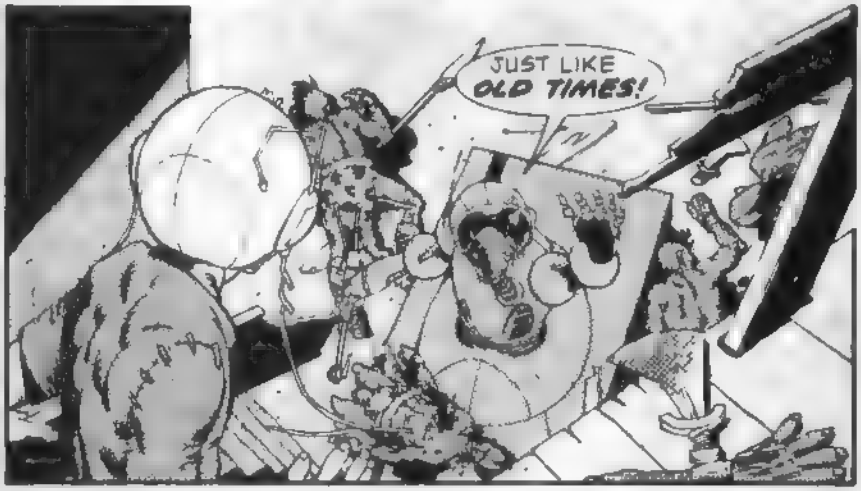
AAAAARGGGHH! COME HERE! COME GET ME NOW! COME GET HUNTER!!


THAK

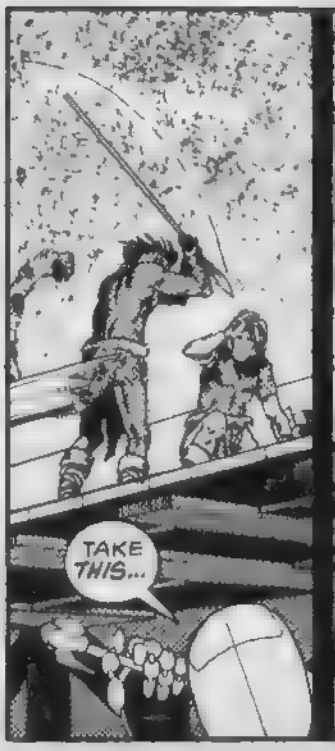
THAK
CRAK
AAAAAAAAAAGGEEEE!!

KARAS!
BEHIND YOU!

NARRRRIEEE
SSSST


JUST LIKE OLD TIMES!

KARAS!
VOMIT SUCKING PIG!
GHUMP!


TAKE THIS...

GSSST!
...YOU WORM!

KARAS! JUMP FOR IT!

CAN YOU USE THAT THING?
I'LL TAKE A CRASH COURSE!
I'LL GET THEM ON THE WALL! YOU COVER THE COURT-YARD!

WHAT'LL IT TAKE TO GET THESE DAMNED PEASANTS TO FIGHT?
A KING!
YOU GOT A CROWN ON YOU?
TAT! TAT! TAT! RAT!

THEY'RE GETTING AWAY FROM ME! CAN'T KILL THEM FAST ENOUGH! TOO MANY OF THEM!
MAY HAVE TO RUN FOR IT!

I THINK IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT, BOY!
THIS COULD RUIN MY WHOLE DAY! DAMMIT! MY GUN'S EMPTY!
THIS IS IT!
CLICK

I'M SORRY, KARAS. I LET YOU DOWN. I SHOULD HAVE STEERED YOU CLEAR OF THIS DAMNED PLACE.
WE'LL NEVER GET TO YAUST NOW. WE TRIED, WE FAILED!

LET'S MAKE THESE DOGS WORK FOR THE R SUPPER!
WEOEOE
WAIT! SOMEONE'S BLOWING WARHORNS!

RALLY TO ME! LET US SING OUR BLOODSONG! HYYAAAHH!
THE KING IS RETURNED!

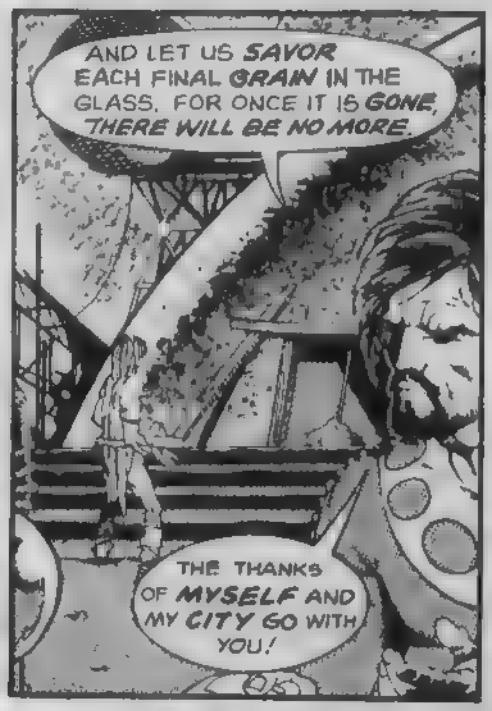
THE TRAP WAS SPRUNG! THE WARLORD HAD THE GOBLINS WHERE HE'D WANTED THEM. THEY WERE SURROUNDED, AND THEY COULD NOT ESCAPE.

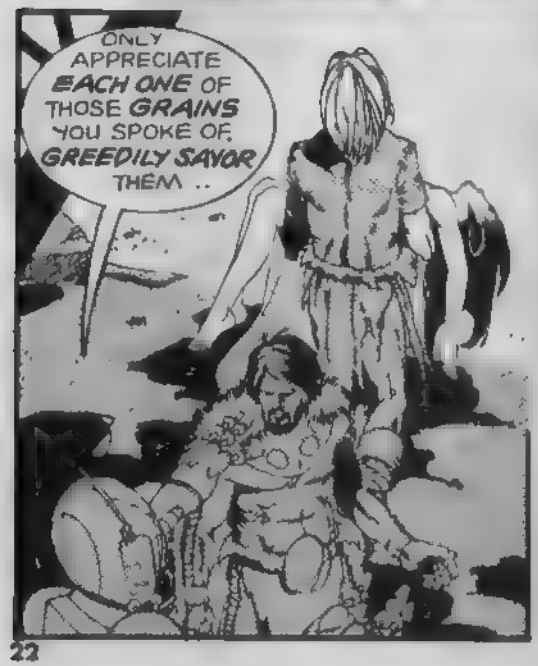
"THE TIME OF MAN, AND MAN'S DEEDS HAVE ALL BUT RUN ITS COURSE!"

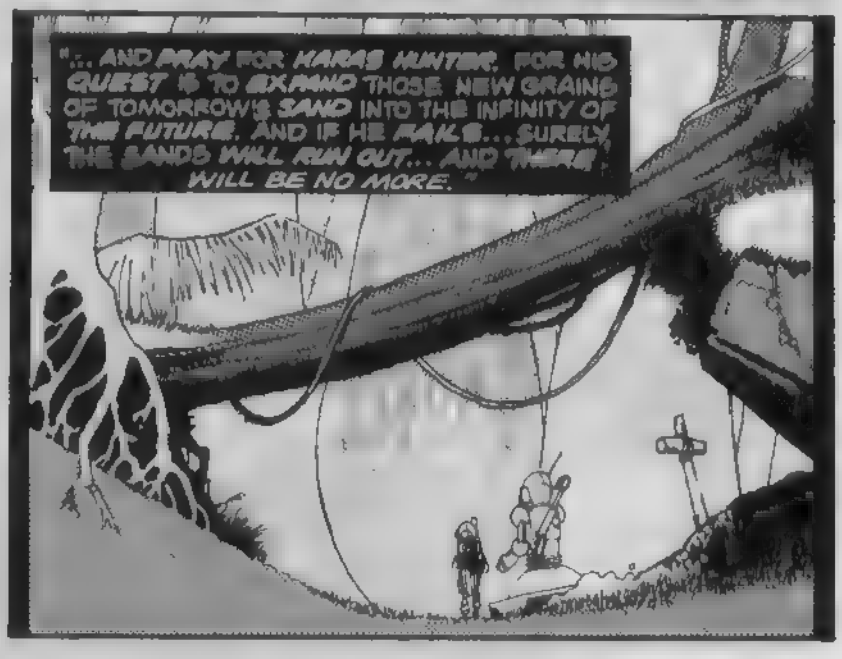
"THE PAST IS THE ONLY REALITY LEFT US. THERE IS NO PRESENT, FOR EVEN AS THE PRESENT TRANSPIRES, IT BECOMES THE PAST!"

"THERE IS NO FUTURE, FOR IT HAS NOT YET COME. THE PAST IS EXPANDING DAILY, HOURLY, MINUTE BY MINUTE, SECOND BY SECOND."

"TIME WITHIN THE HOURGLASS IS DRAINING SWIFTLY, THE SAND IN THE BOTTOM IS THE PAST, IT IS NEARLY FULL... THE SAND OF THE FUTURE IS BUT A FEW GRAINS...!"



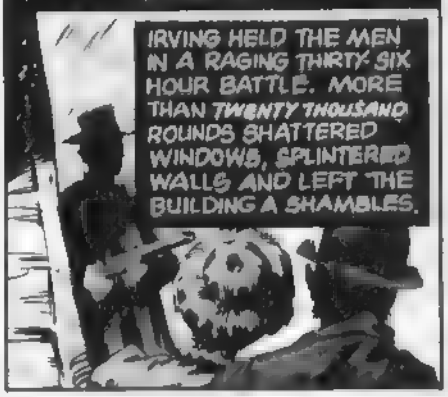




INVINCIBLE IRVING McCOY WAS ALREADY A LEGEND THE NIGHT HE SLITHERED INTO FEATHERBED, ARIZONA. AN ACCOMPLISHED GUNMAN OF SOME NOTORIETY, HIS EXPLOITS HAD BEEN EXAGGERATED INTO UTTER LIES BY THE SAME NICKEL NOVELISTS WHOSE WRITINGS MADE HEROES OF SO MANY RUSTLERS, THIEVES AND GUNSLINGERS.

AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS FAME, IRVING HAD HIS OWN PULP MAGAZINE AND A FOLLOWING OF IDOLATERS WHO BELIEVED THE OUTLAW TO BE THE ROBIN HOOD OF THE WEST.

IRVING GOT HIS NICKNAME AND REPUTATION, THE NIGHT HE LOOTED THE SARSAPARILLA SPRINGS BANK. A PATROLLING MARSHAL SAW IRVING'S LIGHT IN THE VAULT AND QUICKLY ASSEMBLED EIGHTEEN RESERVE DEPUTIES. THEY ENCIRCLED THE BANK AND TRIED TO BLAST IRVING OUT.

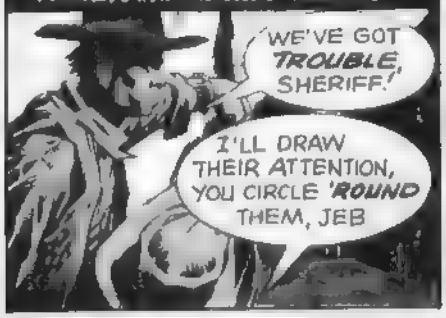


BY THE TIME IRVING WAS FORCED TO SURRENDER, HE HAD SUSTAINED NOT A SINGLE SCRATCH.

HE HAD LAIN FLAT ON THE BANK'S CONCRETE FLOOR, WHICH HAD BEEN DUG EIGHT INCHES INTO THE GROUND. EVERY BULLET FIRED BY THE LAWMEN WHIZZED NEATLY OVER IRVING'S HEAD.

AFTER THE SARSAPARILLA BANK JOB, THE NICKEL NOVELISTS DUBBED HIM INVINCIBLE IRVING, THE MAN WHO COULD NOT BE KILLED. HE ADDED TO THE MYTH BY STATING THAT NO CELL COULD CONFINE HIM FOR LONG, EITHER.

HIS BOAST PROVED PROPHETIC. IRVING ESCAPED JAIL SHORTLY AFTER HIS CAPTURE, AND WAS NEVER IMPRISONED AGAIN.

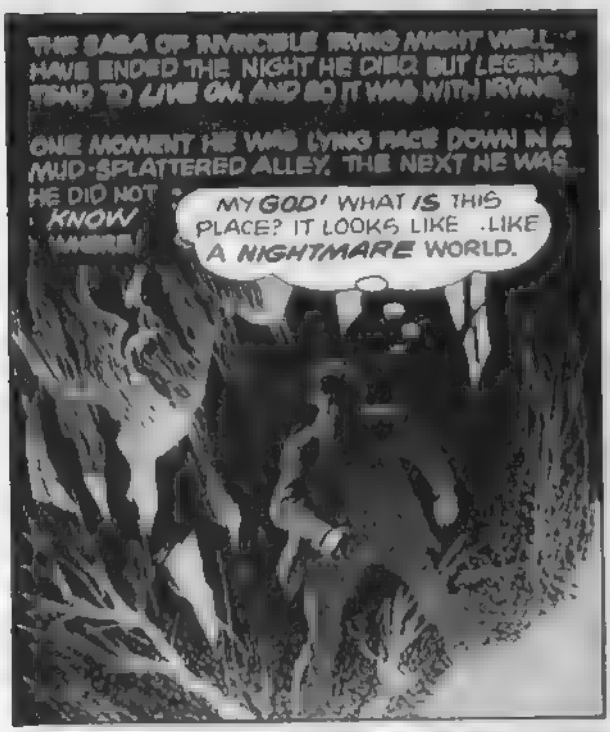


IRVING'S EXPLOITS GREW MORE AND MORE FANTASTIC AS WELL-MEANING PULP WRITERS SOUGHT HIGHER SALES FIGURES. THE OUTLAW BECAME AN OVERNIGHT HERO, AND A LEGEND IN HIS OWN TIME.

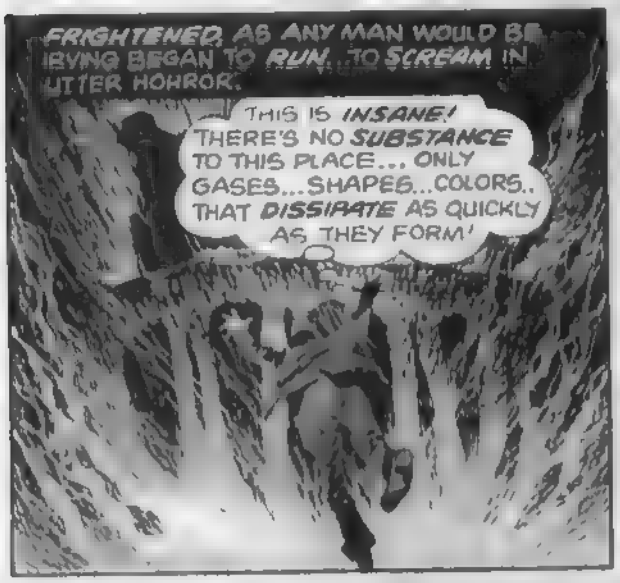
IRVING READ EVERY WORD THAT WAS WRITTEN ABOUT HIM, AND BEGAN, ALONG WITH MANY OTHERS, TO BELIEVE THAT HE TRULY WAS INVINCIBLE... THE MAN WHO COULD NOT DIE.

IRVING and the DEVIL-PIE

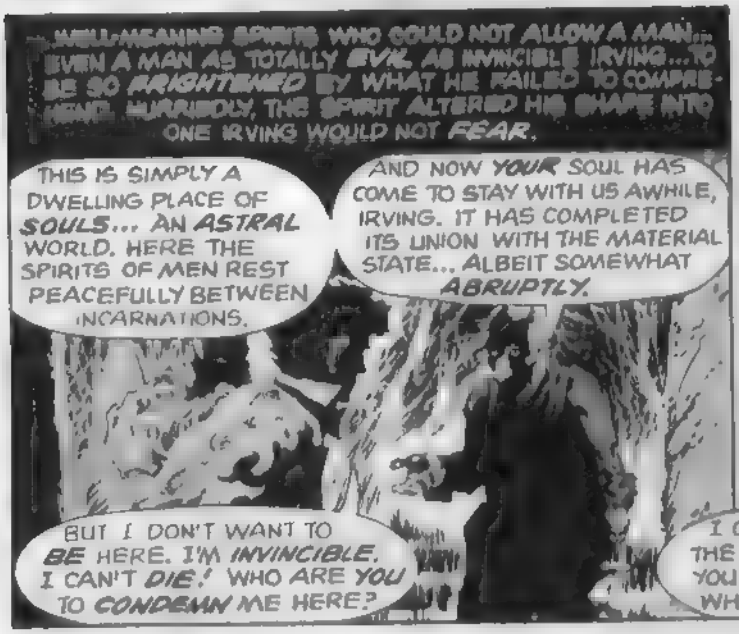
STORY: BILL DuBAY / ART: LEOPOLD SANCHEZ

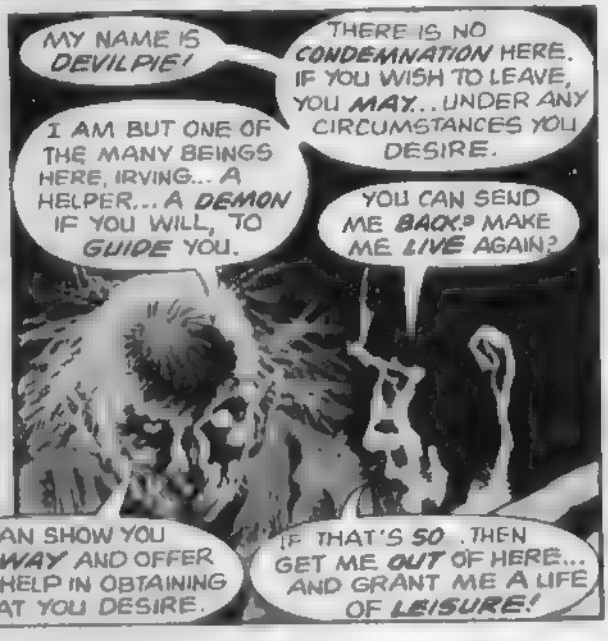

THE SAGA OF INVINCIBLE IRVING MIGHT WELL HAVE ENDED THE NIGHT HE DIED. BUT LEGENDS TEND TO LIVE ON, AND SO IT WAS WITH IRVING.
ONE MOMENT HE WAS LYING FACE DOWN IN A MUD-SPLATTERED ALLEY. THE NEXT HE WAS... HE DID NOT KNOW WHERE!
MY GOD! WHAT IS THIS PLACE? IT LOOKS LIKE ...LIKE A NIGHTMARE WORLD.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE PEOPLE GONE? AND HOW IN HEAVEN'S NAME DID I GET HERE?
I...I WAS SHOT... BLEEDING... DYING. NOW I DON'T EVEN HAVE A WOUND.
YET MY SHIRT'S TORN OPEN... LIKE I'D CAUGHT A BLAST FROM A SHOTGUN!

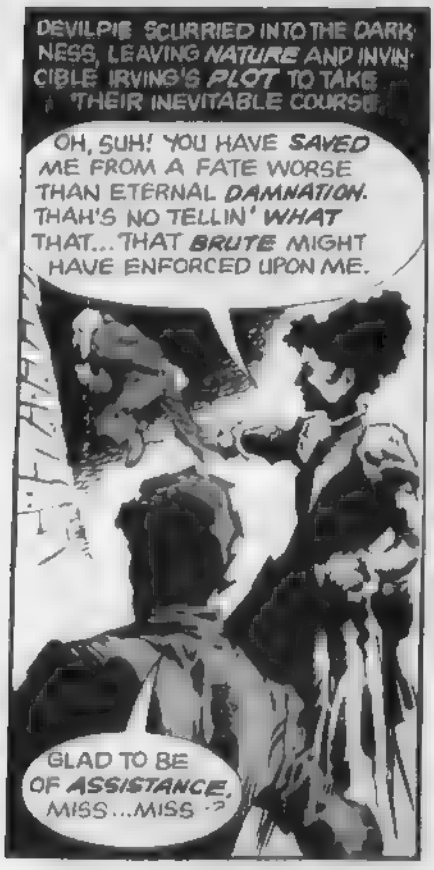

FRIGHTENED, AS ANY MAN WOULD BE, IRVING BEGAN TO RUN...TO SCREAM IN UTTER HORROR.
THIS IS INSANE! THERE'S NO SUBSTANCE TO THIS PLACE... ONLY GASES...SHAPES...COLORS.. THAT DISSIPATE AS QUICKLY AS THEY FORM!

HE RAN...STUMBLED... FELL BEFORE GIBBERING APPARITIONS...HIDEOUS SPIRITS WHO ATTEMPTED TO QUELL THE SHRIEKING MAN'S FEAR...
NO! NO! NOW I KNOW I'M DEAD AND THIS IS HELL!
YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING TO FOOLISHNESS HANDED DOWN FOR GENERATIONS!
THERE IS NO HELL, IRVING!


...WELL-MEANING SPIRITS WHO COULD NOT ALLOW A MAN... EVEN A MAN AS TOTALLY EVIL AS INVINCIBLE IRVING...TO BE SO FRIGHTENED BY WHAT HE FAILED TO COMPREHEND. HURRIEDLY, THE SPIRIT ALTERED HIS SHAPE INTO ONE IRVING WOULD NOT FEAR.
THIS IS SIMPLY A DWELLING PLACE OF SOULS... AN ASTRAL WORLD. HERE THE SPIRITS OF MEN REST PEACEFULLY BETWEEN INCARNATIONS.
AND NOW YOUR SOUL HAS COME TO STAY WITH US AWHILE, IRVING. IT HAS COMPLETED ITS UNION WITH THE MATERIAL STATE... ALBEIT SOMEWHAT ABRUPTLY.
BUT I DON'T WANT TO BE HERE. I'M INVINCIBLE. I CAN'T DIE! WHO ARE YOU TO CONDEMN ME HERE?


MY NAME IS DEVILPIE!
THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION HERE. IF YOU WISH TO LEAVE, YOU MAY... UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES YOU DESIRE.
I AM BUT ONE OF THE MANY BEINGS HERE, IRVING... A HELPER... A DEMON IF YOU WILL, TO GUIDE YOU.
YOU CAN SEND ME BACK, MAKE ME LIVE AGAIN?
I CAN SHOW YOU THE WAY AND OFFER YOU HELP IN OBTAINING WHAT YOU DESIRE.
IF THAT'S SO ...THEN GET ME OUT OF HERE... AND GRANT ME A LIFE OF LEISURE!

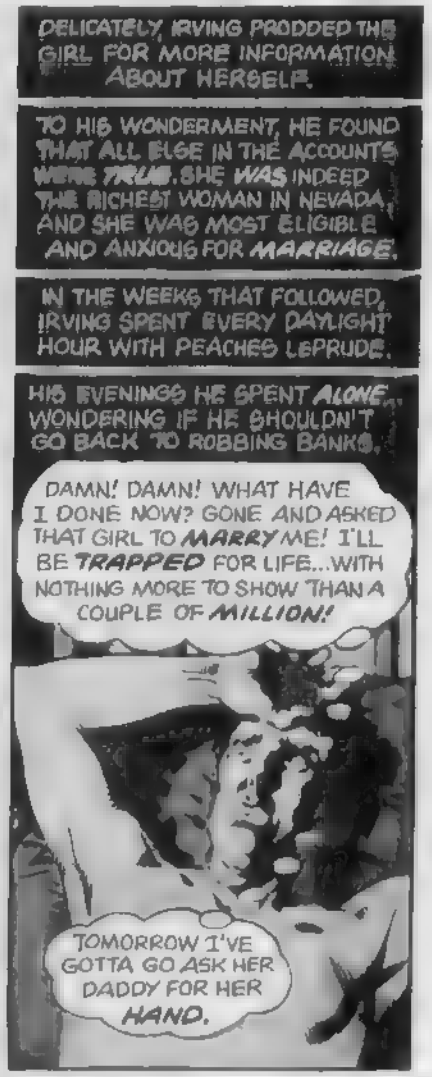
AS YOU WISH, IRVING. BEFORE YOU IS THE TUNNEL OF LIFE. FOLLOW IT. IT LEADS TO WHATEVER YOU DESIRE!
ONCE THERE, CALL UPON ME AND I WILL ASSIST YOU IN OBTAINING YOUR ASPIRATIONS LEISURE AND WEALTH
THAT'S IT?
THAT'S IT, IRVING! HAPPY LIFE
IRVING WAS INCREDULOUS. DISBELIEVING. HE WALKED THE DARKENED TUNNEL FEARFULLY, EXPECTING AT ANY MOMENT TO BE JUMPED BY SATAN AND THE HORDE OF MINIONS WHO POPULATE THE NON-EXISTENT HELL, IN WHICH HE DO STRONGLY BELIEVES.
S-SUNLIGHT! AIR! AND SOLID GROUND TO WALK ON! THEN THAT DEMON, DEVILPIE, WAS RIGHT! I'M BACK IN THE REAL WORLD WHERE I BELONG!
WELCOME TO HORSEGLUE POPULATION 76
AND THIS IS HORSEGLUE, NEVADA, WHERE MISS PEACHES LEPRUDE, THE PRETTIEST, RICHEST, MOST ELIGIBLE SINGLE GIRL IN ALL THE WEST RESIDES.
I READ ABOUT HER IN MY LATEST INVINCIBLE IRVING NICKEL NOVEL.
NOW I'M GONNA FIND ME A WAY TO MEET AND MARRY THAT WOMAN . AND LIVE THE LIFE OF LEISURE DEVILPIE PROMISED.
SO IRVING SOUGHT OUT THE DESIRABLE MISS LEPRUDE. HE FOUND HER IN THE SMALL TOWN'S MOST FASHIONABLE BOUTIQUE, AND WAITED HOURS FOR A CHANCE TO MEET HER.
EXASPERATED BY HIS LACK OF OPPORTUNITY, HE FINALLY ASKED THE DEMON SPIRIT, DEVILPIE, FOR ASSISTANCE.
TO HIS HORROR, THE CREATURE MATERIALIZED IN THE NOTHINGNESS BESIDE HIM.
DEVILPIE! HOW'D YOU DO THAT?
NO PROBLEM TO IT. I'LL JUST PLAY THE BAD GUY. YOU PLAY THE GOOD GUY FOR A CHANGE
TRADE SECRET, IRV. SO THAT'S THE RICH YOUNG WOMAN YOU WANT TO CORRAL.
LOOKING HIS ROLE FOR ALL THE WORLD, THE DEMON SPRANG AT THE WOMAN, ACTING THE DRUNKEN LECHER.
HE HADN'T HELD A WOMAN IN HIS ARMS SINCE HIS LAST INCARNATION. HE LOOKED FORWARD TO THE EXPERIENCE...RIGHT UP TO THE TIME HE PLACED HIS ARMS AROUND HER AND GOT A LOOK AT HER FACE.
C'MON, BABE... HOW'S ABOUT A LITTLE NOOKIE?
THIS IS THE GIRL IRVING WANTS?
HOPE THAT BOY KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING!
EEEK! UNHAND ME, YOU VILE, SMELLING BEAST!
OUR HERO WASTED NO TIME LEAPING AT THE "MASHER," SWINGING WITH HIS BEST HOLIDAY HAYMAKER.
IT WAS A MOST IMPRESSIVE SPECTACLE... ESPECIALLY FROM THE DEMON'S ADVANTAGEOUS AERIAL VIEWPOINT.
RELEASE THAT BEAUTEOUS CREATURE, YOU CAD!
BEAUTEOUS CREATURE? I'M GLAD MY EYES AIN'T AS BAD AS HIS!


DEVILPIE SCURRIED INTO THE DARKNESS, LEAVING NATURE AND INVINCIBLE IRVING'S PLOT TO TAKE THEIR INEVITABLE COURSE.
OH, SUH! YOU HAVE SAVED ME FROM A FATE WORSE THAN ETERNAL DAMNATION. THAH'S NO TELLIN' WHAT THAT... THAT BRUTE MIGHT HAVE ENFORCED UPON ME.
GLAD TO BE OF ASSISTANCE, MISS...MISS ?

THE GRATEFUL WOMAN LOOKED INTO THE EYES OF HER SAVIOR AND, BY THE LIGHT OF A NEARBY LAMP, IRVING PLAINLY SAW THE FACE OF MISS PEACHES LEPRUDE FOR THE FIRST TIME.
NEVER HAD INVINCIBLE IRVING LOOKED SO DEFEATED.
MAH NAME'S PEACHES LEPRUDE, SUH! AH'M FOREVAH IN YOAH DEBT.
NOT THE PEACHES LEPRUDE, OF WHOM I HAVE READ SO MUCH.
THE VERY SAME, SUH!
I KNEW IT! YOU NEVER CAN BELIEVE THOSE DAMNED LYING MAGAZINES.
SUH?
I...I ONLY MEANT THAT YOU ARE FAR MORE...UH... BEAUTIFUL .. FAR MORE EXCITING THAN I ENVISIONED.

WHY, SUH... IT'S SO NICE OF YOU TO SAY SO. MOST PEOPLE THINK THOSE NOVELS ARE A FARCE, BUT I KNOW THAT TO BE OTHERWISE.
PLEASE ALLOW ME TO GRANT YOU A SMALL TOKEN OF MY APPRECIATION FOAH YOAH MOST HELPFUL ASSISTANCE.
OH...IT'S NOT NECESSARY... R-REALLY, MAAM!
BUT IT IS, SUH! IT MOST DEFINITELY IS!
POOR IRVING. HE HAD READ SO MANY TWISTED LIES OF HIS OWN EXPLOITS, THAT HE HAD ACTUALLY COME TO BELIEVE THEM.

HE ACCEPTED EVERY WORD OF THE INVINCIBLE IRVING NOVELS AS GOSPEL...
UH UHMMM...!
...AND IT JOLTED HIM SEVERELY TO FIND PEACHES LEPRUDE'S BEAUTY SLIGHTLY MORE THAN EXAGGERATED IN THE ACCOUNTS HE HAD READ ABOUT HER.
HE WONDERED HOW MUCH MORE OF PEACHES' STORIES WERE LIES... AND IF BEING AN OUTLAW WASN'T EASIER THAN WHAT HE WAS ENDURING NOW.


DELICATELY, IRVING PRODDED THE GIRL FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HERSELF.
TO HIS WONDERMENT, HE FOUND THAT ALL ELSE IN THE ACCOUNTS WERE TRUE. SHE WAS INDEED THE RICHEST WOMAN IN NEVADA, AND SHE WAS MOST ELIGIBLE AND ANXIOUS FOR MARRIAGE.
IN THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED, IRVING SPENT EVERY DAYLIGHT HOUR WITH PEACHES LEPRUDE.
HIS EVENINGS HE SPENT ALONE, WONDERING IF HE SHOULDN'T GO BACK TO ROBBING BANKS.
DAMN! DAMN! WHAT HAVE I DONE NOW? GONE AND ASKED THAT GIRL TO MARRY ME! I'LL BE TRAPPED FOR LIFE...WITH NOTHING MORE TO SHOW THAN A COUPLE OF MILLION!
TOMORROW I'VE GOTTA GO ASK HER DADDY FOR HER HAND.

ENCOUNTERING PEACHES' STERN-FACED FATHER WAS, FOR IRVING, A MORE HARROWING EXPERIENCE THAN THE ORDEAL THAT HAD EARNED HIM HIS REPUTATION. HE DID HIS BEST TO CONVINCE THE OLD MAN OF HIS UNWORTHINESS FOR THE GIRL'S HAND...!

REALLY, SIR... I'VE NO JOB, NO PROSPECTS, NO SKILLS AND IT WOULD ONLY EMBARRASS YOUR FAMILY IF SHE WERE TO MARRY SOMEONE SO TOTALLY *BENEATH* HER SOCIAL STATUS

YOAH HONESTY IS *REFRESHING*, MAH BOY... A TRAIT NOT FOUND IN MEN SEEKING SOLELY AFTAH *WEALTH*.

WHILE ALL YOU SAY IS NO DOUBT *TRUE*, MAH DAUGHTER *DOES* LOVE YOU... AND AH THINK YOU WILL MAKE HER A *FINE* HUSBAND.

YO'ALL HAVE MAH *BLESSINGS*

THUS, THE BOND WAS SEALED. YET IRVING WAS TORN BETWEEN A *DESIRE* FOR A LIFE OF COMFORT AND RICHES AND A REVULSION FOR PEACHES' HAUNTING *FACE*. IRVING'S INDECISIVENESS LASTED JUST LONG ENOUGH FOR THE GIRL TO GET HIM TO THE *ALTAR*.

WITH THE MATRIMONIAL CEREMONY, IRVING OBTAINED *ALL* HE HAD EXPRESSED A DESIRE FOR WHEN IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.

OH, WHAT HAVE I DONE *NOW*? I'VE GOT *MONEY*... MORE THAN I'LL EVER NEED. BUT I'VE ALSO GOT TO WAKE UP TO MISS PEACHES HERE EVERY MORNING FOR THE REST OF MY DAYS

...UNLESS... UNLESS SOMETHING WERE TO *HAPPEN* TO HER!

THE MONTHS SLIPPED BY, AND IRVING BECAME MORE ACCUSTOMED TO THE GOOD LIFE, YET HIS *HATRED* ALSO GREW FOR THE FACE WHICH *HAUNTED* HIS EVERY WAKING HOUR.

I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY LONGER! SHE'S GOT TO *DIE*!

I CAN'T JUST COME OUT AND *SHOOT* HER! *I'D* BE THE FIRST ONE PEOPLE WOULD *SUSPECT*!

NO, IT'S GOT TO BE MUCH MORE *SUBTLE* ... MORE *NATURAL*!

THE MORE HE THOUGHT ABOUT IT, THE CLOSER HE CAME TO MARRING HIS NEW LIFE WITH *MURDER*.

PERHAPS IF I SUMMONED UP THAT *DEMON* CREATURE . *DEVILPIE*.

NO... HE'D NEVER HELP ME DO AWAY WITH THE VERY WOMAN HE HOOKED ME UP WITH.

HE MIGHT EVEN TURN *AGAINST* ME... TAKE ME BACK TO THAT... *PLACE*.

NO, THIS IS SOMETHING I'LL HAVE TO DO *MYSELF*.

A FALL FROM THE TOP OF THE STAIRS *MIGHT* BREAK HER NECK...

THEN AGAIN, IT MIGHT *NOT*.

IRVING GREW MORE BOLD WITH EACH SUCCESSIVE IDEA...!

WHAT IF A TINY *BLACK WIDOW* WERE TO SLIP INTO HER BED...?

THE *POISON* FROM ONE OF THOSE THINGS COULD KILL A GRIZZLY.

BUT WHAT IF IT GETS *ME*, TOO? SPIDERS ARE *OUT*!

BUT *POISON*!? OF COURSE!

IRVING WASTED NO TIME LOCATING THE FASTEST, MOST UNDETECTABLE POISON AVAILABLE. HE SET THE TIME... THE DATE AND WAS READY TO BECOME THE *RICHEST* WIDOWER IN THE WORLD.

TONIGHT IS THE *LAST* NIGHT YOU SHARE MY BED, SWEET PEACHES...

FOR YOUR BREAK FAST WILL HOLD A VERY SPECIAL *TREAT!*

THAT VERY NIGHT IRVING HEARD *FOOTSTEPS* IN HIS STUDY. HE WHIRLED AROUND AND WAS SURPRISED TO SEE...

DEVILPIE! HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?

TRADE SECRET, MY SON WHAT'S THIS I HEAR? YOU'RE PLANNING TO *DO IN* THE MISSUS?

THE SPIRIT CAUGHT IRVING BY *SURPRISE*...BUT IT DIDN'T CATCH HIM *UNPREPARED.*

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO *STOP* ME, DEVILPIE. SPIRIT, DEMON OR WHATEVER YOU ARE, IN THE MATERIAL WORLD YOU'RE *FLESH* AND *BLOOD.* *YOU* CAN BE *KILLED.*

BOAM!

BAM!

MY GOOD FRIEND, I HAVE NO *INTENTION* OF ST--!

BUT BEFORE THE DEMON COULD FINISH HIS SENTENCE, INVINCIBLE IRVING EMBEDDED TWO *BULLETS* IN HIS SKULL!

NOW IRVING, WAS THAT *NICE?* I MEAN...*GEE*... IF YOU WANTED TO PRACTICE YOUR MARKSMANSHIP, YOU COULD HAVE FOUND A LESS *FRAGILE* TARGET!

NO! NO! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! YOU SHOULD BE *DEAD!*

S-STAY *AWAY* FROM ME, CREATURE!

D-DON'T HURT ME! *NOOOO!*

INVINCIBLE IRVING HURRIEDLY *SLAMMED* THE STUDY DOOR, SHUTTING THE BLEEDING DEMON-BEING *INSIDE* BEFORE HE COULD TELL IRVING HE MEANT NO HARM. HE SIMPLY WANTED TO ARRANGE A CLEANER, MORE HUMANE WAY OF *ELIMINATING* THE UNWANTED *PEACHES.*

BUT IRVING *NEVER* LEARNED THAT!

HAVE TO GET *AWAY! RUN!* THAT DEMON'LL TAKE ME BACK TO THAT WEIRD PLACE FOR THIS

GOTTA GO WHERE HE'LL NEVER *FIND* ME!

IRVING BARELY HAD TIME TO GRAB HIS HAT AS HE FLED HIS ELEGANT MANSION.

I...I'VE GOT TO LEAVE IT *ALL*...THE MONEY..THE COMFORT EVERY THING.

INTO THE WOODS, THE FRIGHTENED MAN RAN... 'TIL UTTER *EXHAUSTION* OVERPOWERED HIM!

HE HALTED ONLY LONG ENOUGH TO CATCH HIS BREATH BEFORE *RUNNING* SOME MORE.

IT'S SAID THAT NO HUMAN BEING EVER *AGAIN* SET EYES ON INVINCIBLE IRVING *McCOY.*

AFTER A TIME, HIS WIFE STOPPED YEARNING FOR HIM... THE PUBLISHERS OF INVINCIBLE IRVING'S NICKEL NOVELS CEASED PUBLICATION...

...AND SOON THE WORLD SIMPLY *FORGOT* THE ONCE *INVINCIBLE IRVING McCOY!*

IRVING LIVED OUT THE *REMAINDER* OF HIS DAYS IN AN ABANDONED HERMIT'S SHANTY IN THE UNEXPLORED AREA OF NEVADA.

'TIL THE DAY HE DIED, IRVING WAS *CONVINCED* THAT, HERE, DEVILPIE WOULD NOT FIND HIM.

BUT THE DEMON-CREATURE KNEW WHERE IRVING WAS *ALL ALONG.*

THE ANCIENT IRVING WAS ON HIS DEATHBED WHEN *DEVILPIE* FINALLY APPEARED. BEARING NO MALICE, NO ILL WILL, *DEVILPIE* HAD COME SIMPLY TO HELP AN OLD FRIEND MAKE HIS JOURNEY TO THE SPIRIT WORLD!

POOTER and the MAGIC MAN

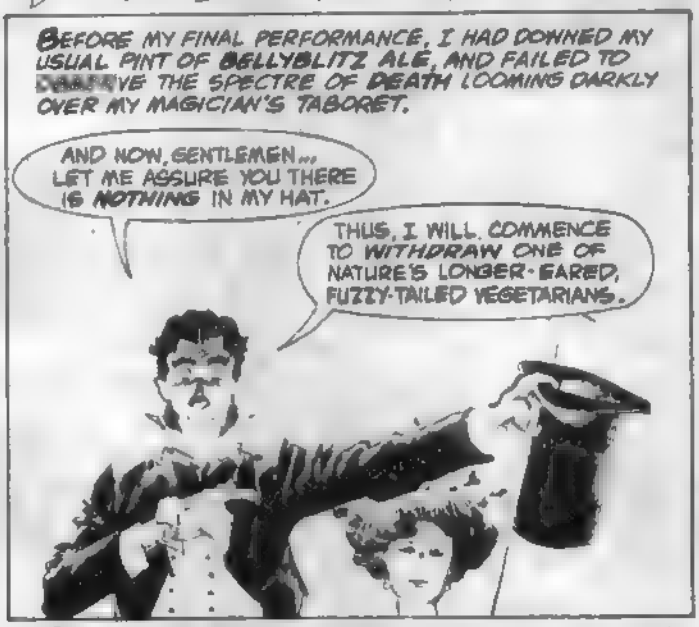
BY THE SPRING OF 1978, IT WAS MY MISFORTUNE TO HAVE ENDURED A CAREER RIDDLED WITH SETBACKS SO SEVERE THAT I FOUND IT NECESSARY TO PARTAKE OF ALCOHOL FOR CONSOLATION.

ONCE, I HAD DELUSIONS OF MAKING THE NAME BERTRAND SMITHPOOTER, ILLUSIONIST, THE MOST NOTED IN ALL BRITAIN... OF PERFORMING WITHIN GREAT MUSIC HALLS BEFORE SOCIETY'S FINEST... OF FINDING MYSELF GIVEN AUDIENCE IN BUCKINGHAM PALACE BEFORE THE ROYAL FAMILY.

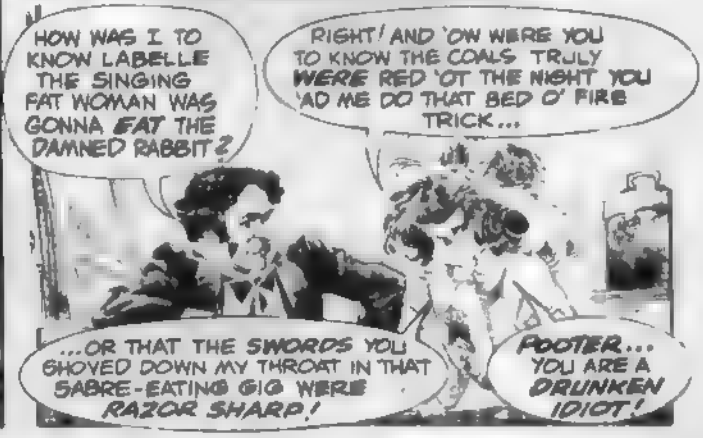
MY DREAMS, HOWEVER, WERE THOSE OF NAIVE YOUTH. COLD REALITY RELEGATED MAGICMEN, NOT TO THE GREAT PERFORMING HALLS, BUT TO THE PUBS OF LONDON'S SLEAZIER NIGHT DISTRICTS.

I HAD ENJOYED EMPLOYMENT AT THE RED COCK GRILL FOR MORE THAN A WEEK BEFORE MISFORTUNE THUNDERED UPON ME. EACH NIGHT, MY ASSISTANT, LISETTE AND I DUTIFULLY FOLLOWED THE PERFORMANCE OF PARISIAN DANCE QUEEN, BOOM BOOM BEECHEAU.

BEFORE MY FINAL PERFORMANCE, I HAD DOWNED MY USUAL PINT OF BELLYBLITZ ALE, AND FAILED TO DISMISS THE SPECTRE OF DEATH LOOMING DARKLY OVER MY MAGICIAN'S TABORET.



IT WAS, I AM SAD TO SAY, NOT MY FINEST PERFORMANCE. HOWEVER, I HAVE ENDURED MORE SERIOUS EMBARASSMENTS IN VARIOUS STAGES OF MY CAREER.



STORY: BILL DuBAY / ART: LUIS BERMEJO

ALAS, POOR LISETTE QUIT MY EMPLOY THAT NIGHT. YET, IT MATTERED FOR NAUGHT SINCE THE GOOD PROPRIETER OF THE RED COCK TERMINATED MY ENGAGEMENT AS WELL.

I, OF COURSE, RETREATED TO A SOMEWHAT COZIER IF MORE DISMAL SECTION OF THE CITY WHERE I SPENT WHAT WAS LEFT OF MY MEAGRE WEEK'S WAGES ON A PINT OF BELLYBLITZ' FINEST, AND THE COMPANY OF TWO LOVELIES OF NOTABLE ATTRIBUTES.

WITHIN THE HOUR, BOTH MY BOTTLE AND MY PERSONAGE WERE THOROUGHLY SPENT, AND I STAGGERED FROM THE YOUNG LADIES' ESTABLISHMENT IN A LANGUID BUT EXTREMELY PLEASANT STUPOR.

I PLOPPED DOWN BENEATH THE TOMBSTONE OF ONE SIGMUND PAVLOV-FREUD, AND, FOR LACK OF ANYONE BETTER TO CONVERSE WITH, BEGAN RELATING MY TROUBLES TO THE FACELESS OLD GENTLEMAN WHO LAY IN THE GROUND BELOW ME.

I HAD VOICED OUT SEVERAL SELF-DEBASING COMPLAINTS WHEN A SHIMMERING LIGHT APPEARED BEFORE ME. THE LIGHT GAVE WAY, AND FROM NOWHERE, AN ODD-LOOKING GENTLEMAN SPRANG FORTH AND STOOD LOOKING DOWN UPON ME.

I, SIR, AM YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT, SIGMUND PAVLOV-FREUD, *LATE* OF THIS WORLD. I TAKE IT YOU HAVE BEEN SPEAKING TO *ME* THESE PAST FEW MOMENTS!

THAT *IS* MY GRAVE YOU ARE RESTING UPON!

UHR... PLEASED TO MEET YOUR ACQUAINTANCE... OR WHATEVER IT IS I'M *SPEAKING* AT, MR. PAVLOV-FREUD.

USUALLY WHEN FEELING THIS SOGGY, I ADDRESS MYSELF TO THE *ELEPHANTS* THAT FLUTTER ABOUT MY HEAD. THIS IS MY FIRST EXPERIENCE AT CONVERSING WITH A *SPECTRE*.

THEN CONSIDER THIS YOUR LUCKY DAY, MY GOOD FRIEND. FOR I BELIEVE THIS SPECTRE CAN BE OF *ASSISTANCE* TO YOU.

YOU SEE, IN LIFE, I *MYSELF* WAS A BIT OF AN *ILLUSIONIST*. IT WAS A PLEASURABLE HOBBY, YET I ASPIRED TO *GREATER* HEIGHTS. HEIGHTS I NEVER REALIZED... UNTIL MY *DEMISE*.

IN DEATH I FOUND MY GOD-GIVEN *SPIRITUAL* ATTRIBUTES INCREASED MY *MAGICAL* ABILITIES A *HUNDRED FOLD*.

WHY, SIR, IN MY PRESENT FORM *NOTHING* IS IMPOSSIBLE. I CAN *SOAR* THROUGH THE HEAVENS OR *HALT* THE EARTH FROM SPINNING *'ROUND* THE SUN.

IT IS AN EXTREMELY *PLEASANT* STATE BROUGHT ABOUT BY DEATH. ALAS, HOWEVER, IT IS *FORBIDDEN* FOR A SPIRIT TO MEDDLE IN AFFAIRS OF THE *MATERIAL* WORLD. SO I MUST CONTENT MYSELF WITH SPIRITUAL PLAY.

IT'S WITHIN MY POWER TO BRING *WEALTH* TO THE POOREST MAN OR *STRIP* THE MOST ELEGANT OF THEIR FINEST ACQUISITIONS.

YET, IT STRIKES ME, MR. SMITHPOOTER, THAT I MIGHT *BEND* THE RULES SLIGHTLY, AND IMPART SOME MEAGRE PORTION OF MY POWERS UNTO *YOU*.

WHY, WITH BUT A *SMIDGEN* OF MY ABILITIES, AS WELL AS A FRIENDLY SPECTRE-GUIDING *LUCK* YOUR WAY, YOU COULD BECOME THE *GREATEST* MAN WHO EVER LIVED!

I WILL ASK *NOTHING* IN RETURN FOR MY GIFTS, GOOD FELLOW, ONLY THAT YOU BECOME THE CALIBRE OF *MAGICMAN* I ALWAYS ASPIRED TO BE... THE *GREATEST* ILLUSIONIST OF ALL TIME...

...*AND* THAT YOU USE YOUR POWERS, WHEN POSSIBLE, TO *AID* THOSE LESS FORTUNATE THAN YOURSELF.

LIKE *THIS*, MY DUMBFOUNDED FRIEND. LIKE *THIS*!

B-BUT HOW... *HOW* WILL YOU GRANT ME THIS POWER?

AND WITH THREE SHARP RAPS ON MY SKULL, THE SPECTRE OF SIGMUND PAVLOV-FREUD WITHERED INTO THE NOTHINGNESS FROM WHENCE IT CAME.

THAT'S IT! I'M SWEARING OFF! WHEN THE BOOZE MAKES YOU SEE GHOSTS WHO PUT LUMPS ON YOUR HEAD, THE END IS NEAR!

BY THE TIME I REACHED MY APARTMENTS, I HAD CONVINCED MYSELF THAT MY CONVERSATIONS WITH MR. PAVLOV-FREUD WERE MERE FIGMENTS OF AN ALE-SOAKED IMAGINATION.

YET, I QUESTIONED THAT CONVICTION, WHEN, UPON ENTERING MY CHAMBERS, I ENCOUNTERED A MOST STUNNING VISION OF LOVELINESS DRESSED IN A SILKEN GOWN AND SMELLING OF THE SWEETEST LILAC WATER THIS SIDE OF MADAME LOOSEDRAWER'S BOUDOUIR.

MY INITIAL THOUGHT WAS THAT THE HAND OF S. PAVLOV-FREUD WAS GUIDING MY LUCK TOWARDS THE BETTER. BUT THEN I RECOGNIZED THE BEAUTIFUL VISION... AS MY LANDLADY!

OH, HOW I HAVE YEARNED FOR YOUR RETURN, DEAR MR. SMITHPOOTER.

MY ARMS HAVE ACHED OF LONELINESS WITHOUT YOU.

MY GOOD MRS. TIGHTHIGH! WHAT WOULD YOUR DEAR DEPARTED HUSBAND THINK?

IT OCCURRED TO ME ONLY THIS AFTERNOON THAT I HAVE TREATED YOU SHABBILY, MR. SMITHPOOTER. I WISH NOW TO MAKE AMENDS!

MY SISTER, PENELOPE, AND I WILL, FROM THIS POINT FORWARD, SEE TO YOUR EVERY NEED.

DEAR, DEAR, MR. SMITHPOOTER!

BY THE WAY, MY LOVE... THIS CAME IN THE MIDDAY POST.

I WAS MOST MEASUREDLY PUZZLED BY THE STRANGE BEHAVIOR OF THE WOMAN WHO, HERETOFORE, HAD SPOKEN ONLY WORDS OF CURT ADMONITION TO ME, AND WHOM I HAD ALWAYS CONSIDERED A HATCHET-FACED OLD MAID.

YET, THE MYSTERY CLEARED ABRUPTLY WHEN I LOOKED UPON THE PAPER HELD BEFORE ME.

IT WAS AN INHERITANCE DOCUMENT FROM THE ROYAL COURTS.

WILL YOU LOOK AT THIS! I HAVE INHERITED THE ENTIRE ESTATE OF ONE MR. MICHAEL ANTHONY RICHMOTHER!

BESIDES A FOUR THOUSAND ACRE ESTATE ADJOINING THE ROYAL FAMILY'S WINTER RETREAT, HE HAS LEFT ME MORE THAN A HALF-MILLION POUNDS...

...AND THE DEED TO THE GOLDEN GOOSE THEATRE... THE MOST ELITE MUSIC HALL IN ALL OF ENGLAND!

AH, MY LADIES, IT IS ALL SO PLAIN TO ME NOW. WHILE I AM MYSTIFIED WHY A GENTLEMEN OF MR. RICHMOTHER'S STATURE FREQUENTED THE BOURBON BOTTLE PUB, I AM NO LONGER AT A LOSS TO EXPLAIN YOUR ACTIONS.

PERHAPS I TOO, WOULD BEHAVE IN A SIMILAR FASHION TO AN AQUAINTANCE OF THE NEWLY RICH.

YET IT MATTERS NOT!

ALTHOUGH MR RICHMOTHER AND I HAD NEVER MET, THE NOTICE STATED THAT THE GENTLEMAN WAS IN THE AUDIENCE THE NIGHT I LEVITATED POOR LISETTE THROUGH THE CEILING OF THE BOURBON BOTTLE PUB.

THE MAN WAS APPARENTLY STRUCK ON THE HEAD BY A LARGE PIECE OF FALLING PLASTER, AND LINGERED NEAR DEATH FOR MANY WEEKS. IN HIS LAST MOMENTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS, HE WAS STILL SO AMUSED BY MY ACT THAT HE DECREED ME SOLE HEIR TO HIS FORTUNES, BEFORE ROLLING OFF INTO DEATH IN AN UNCONTROLLABLE FIT OF LAUGHTER.

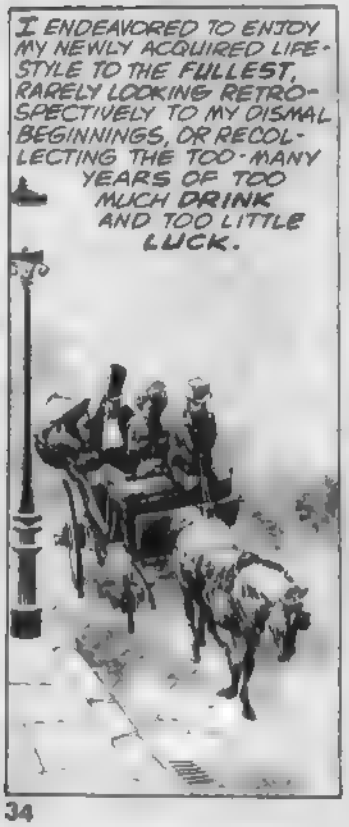
FOR THE MONEY DOES NOT CONCERN ME... AS LONG AS I LIVE IN UNSURPASSED COMFORT FOR THE REMAINDER OF MY DAYS.

AND YOU, GENTLE WOMEN, FOR LACK OF ANYONE MORE WORTHY, SHALL SHARE IN MY FAME.

I AM INTERESTED SOLELY IN THE GREAT MUSIC HALL. NOW THAT IT IS MINE, I SHALL HAVE THE STAGE OF WHICH I HAVE ALWAYS DREAMED. I SHALL BE A STAR!

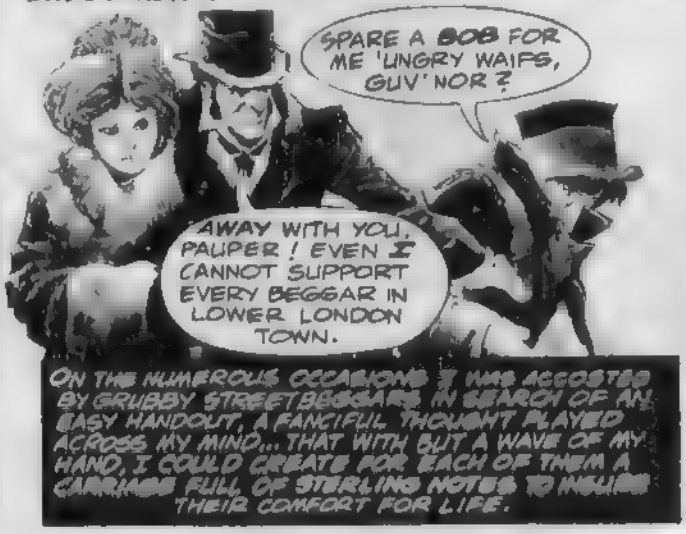
TO BED WITH US NOW! WE MUST SEE HOW WE PERFORM TOGETHER!

THUS, I UNDERTOOK OWNERSHIP OF THE GOLDEN GOOSE THEATRE, LONDON'S SHOWPLACE OF STARS. I CONTINUED TO ENGAGE THE TALENTS OF THE FINEST ENTERTAINERS IN ALL BRITAIN... MADAME AVERY AND HER SINGING PELICANS, MIMI LOWART AND THE ACROBATIC FROG-JUGGLERS, AND THE EVER-POPULAR DANCING ROVER BOYS, BOWSER, FIDO AND SPIKE. AT THE HEAD OF EACH STELLAR LINEUP WAS... MYSELF, THE MAGNIFICENTLY MAGICAL SMITHPOOTER, WITH, OF COURSE, THE WONDEROUS TIGHTHIGH SISTERS!
THE VAST PORTION OF LONDON'S SOCIALLY ELITE PAID HANDSOMELY FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT AFFORDED THEM BY MY THEATRE. AND I WAS NEVER A DISAPPOINTMENT TO THEM... OR MYSELF!
AND NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...
I WILL THRUST A HALF DOZEN SABRES INTO THE BODY OF MY LOVELY ASSISTANT, PENELOPE.
...THE GREAT SMITHPOOTER WILL UNDERTAKE THE MOST DANGEROUS OF ALL ILLUSIONS.
WHILE GERTRUDE WILL ENDURE THE BITTER TEETH OF MY TORTUROUS SAW.
THUS! THUS! THUS! AND THUS! THE RAZOR SHARP BLADES OF MY SWORDS PASS THROUGH THE BOX AND THE BEAUTEOUS BODY OF PENELOPE!
WHILE SWEET GERTRUDE BECOMES HALF HER SIZE AND QUITE BESIDE HERSELF WITH BUT A FEW PASSES OF A PALTRY CARPENTER'S TOOL.
SMILE MY DEAR
A BANDAID
CONCLUDED
WALLAH! PENELOPE EMERGES UN-SCRATCHED AND AS LOVELY AS EVER...



I PUT OUT OF MIND MY QUESTIONABLE MEETING WITH THE SPECTRE OF MR. SIGMUND PAVLOV-FREUD ON THAT DREARY NIGHT SO LONG AGO. NOT ONLY DID I FORGET HIS WORDS ENDOWING ME WITH SUPPOSED MAGICAL ATTRIBUTES... BUT I WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO IGNORE HIS REQUEST THAT I LOOK FAVORABLY AFTER THE LESS FORTUNATE.

AFTER ALL, I NEEDED S. PAVLOV-FREUD'S GUIDANCE NO LONGER. I WAS A SELF-MADE SUCCESS... WITH ONLY SLIGHT HELP FROM MR. RICHMOTHER'S ENDOWMENT.



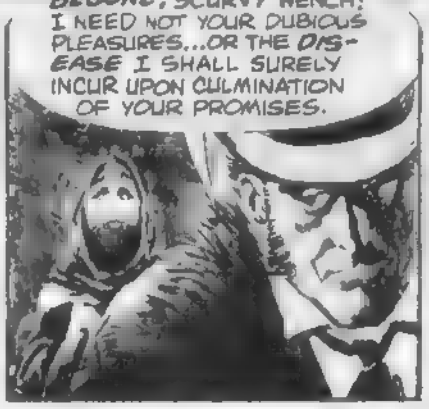
ON THE NUMEROUS OCCASIONS I WAS ACCOSTED BY GRUBBY STREET BEGGARS IN SEARCH OF AN EASY HANDOUT, A FANCIFUL THOUGHT PLAYED ACROSS MY MIND... THAT WITH OUT A WAVE OF MY HAND, I COULD CREATE FOR EACH OF THEM A CARRIAGE FULL OF STERLING NOTES TO INSURE THEIR COMFORT FOR LIFE.

MY SUCCESS CONTINUED FOR MORE THAN A YEAR, MY FAME SPREADING FAR BEYOND LONDON'S MEAGRE BOUNDARIES, SPILLING OVER INTO THE VAST WORLD BEYOND. I HAD INDEED REALIZED MY GOAL OF BECOMING THE WORLD'S MOST NOTED ILLUSIONIST, AND MY CONFIDENCE, MY RICHES AND MY EGO ALL SWELLED PROPORTIONATELY.

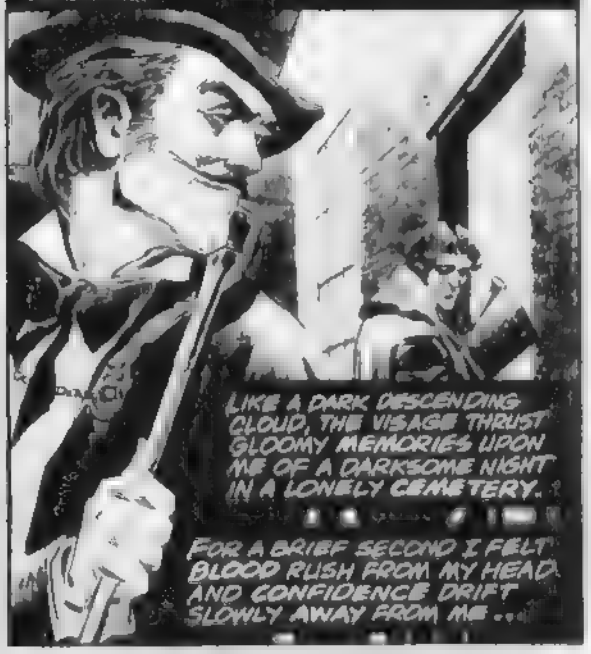
I HAD TAKEN IT UPON MYSELF OF LATE TO WALK TO THE THEATRE, THRILLING WHAT FEW NIGHT PEOPLE I MIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH A BRIEF GLIMPSE OF MY VISAGE.

THUS IT WAS ON THE VERY EVENING THAT I FELT MOST IMPRESSED WITH MYSELF THAT DOOMED MY DOWNFALL.

IT WAS ON THIS FINAL NIGHT THAT I WAS STOPPED SHORT JUST OUTSIDE MY THEATRE BY A WAIF BARELY INTO HER FOURTEENTH YEAR.



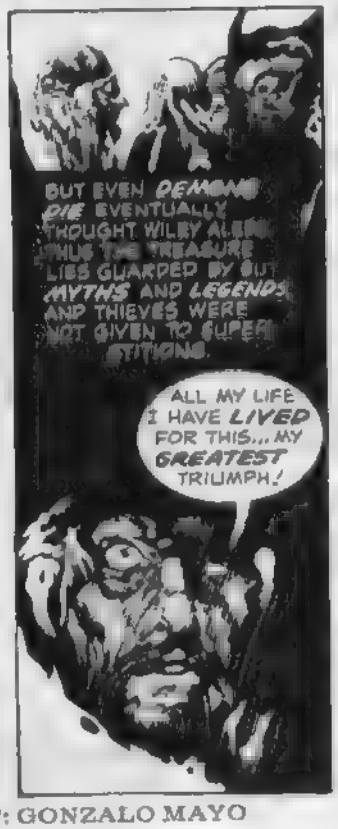
I HAD GRUMBLED MY INSULTS AT THE GIRL AND HASTILY CLAMORED TO THE STAGE ENTRANCE WHEN I CAUGHT SIGHT OF A FAMILIAR LOOKING MAN LURKING IN THE CHILL NIGHT SHADOWS.



...BUT I HAD A PERFORMANCE TO DELIVER THAT EVENING, AND A CROWD OF FAITHFUL ADMIRERS AWAITING ME.

MY HANDS WAVERED BRIEFLY IN THE COURSE OF SEVERAL MINOR TRICKS, AS THEY HAD NOT IN MORE THAN A YEAR. YET, I COVERED MY MISTAKES ADMIRABLY IF I SO SAY, AND THRUST INTO MY FINALE WITH UNUSUAL VIGOR AND CONFIDENCE.

THE GIRLS WERE PAINFULLY COURTEOUS THAT NIGHT, NO DOUBT SENSING SOMETHING AMISS IN MY TIMING. THEY MAINTAINED STIFF THOUGH SOMEWHAT QUIVERING FEAR-FRAUGHT SMILES FOR THE SAKE OF OUR ATTENDING PATRONS. THEY REMAINED TRUE TROOPERS IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD.
I DID NOT REALIZE HOW PROFESSIONAL THE SISTERS TRULY WERE UNTIL I CONCLUDED SAWING GERTRUDE IN TWO AND STEPPED TO PENELOPE'S SABRE-ENCRUSTED CASE TO REMOVE THE DEADLY SWORDPOINTS!
ON NEARING THE CABINET MY FOOT SLIDDED THROUGH A WET, STICKY SUBSTANCE ON THE STAGE FLOOR.
LOOKING DOWN, I WAS HORRIFIED TO SEE A RICH, DEEP RED OOZE SLIPPING FROM THE CRACKS OF THE CABINET'S DOOR.
I LOOKED TO PENELOPE'S FACE. HER EYES WERE GLAZED AND STARING DEEPLY THROUGH ME, WHILE HER THEATRICAL SMILE STILL LAY PLASTERED TO HER FACE.
INSTINCTIVELY, AND WITH MUCH CONCERN, I PULLED THE FIRST SABRE FROM THE POOR GIRL'S BOX. THE TIP WAS COATED WITH A THICK FILM OF MY BEAUTIFUL ASSISTANT'S BLOOD.
GERTRUDE HAD BEEN SEVERED COMPLETELY IN TWO, AND LIKE THE POLISHED PERFORMER SHE HAD BECOME, NEVER UTTERED A WORD DURING HER TORTUROUS DEMISE.
HER SOFT FLESH HAD BEEN PUNCTURED A HALF-DOZEN TIMES WHERE MY BLADES HAD ENTERED THE CONTAINER. THE GIRL WAS DEAD.
FEARFUL FOR GERTRUDE'S LIFE AS WELL, I FRANTICALLY TORE AWAY THE SIDES OF THE CASKET-LIKE BOX IN WHICH SHE LAY... ONLY TO DISCOVER MY WORST FEARS REALIZED.
I FEAR THAT MY OWN PERFORMANCE WAS NOT AS COMMENDABLE AS THAT OF MY ASSISTANTS THAT NIGHT. I AM TOLD THAT I WENT HORRIBLY AND IRREVERSIBLY INSANE BEFORE A VAST AUDIENCE OF THE SOCIALLY ELITE.
THE OCCURRENCES OF THAT HORRIBLE EVENING RUINED THE MAGNIFICENT SMITHFOOTER FOR LIFE. MY VAST ESTATE AND UNLIMITED WEALTH HAVE BEEN CONFISCATED BY THE ROYAL COURTS, AND I HAVE NEVER AGAIN ATTEMPTED TO PERFORM A SINGLE FEAT OF MAGIC.
I SIT WITHIN MY DARK PADDED CELL CHANTING OVER AND OVER THE NAME OF THE ONLY CREATURE WHO CAN ALTER THE STREAM OF MISFORTUNES WHICH HAVE BEFALLEN ME.
BUT I FEAR THAT MY PITIABLE PLEAS WILL NEVER EVEN BE HEARD... BY THE OFFENDED SPIRIT OF MR. S. PAVLOV-FREUD.



STORY: BUDD LEWIS / ART: GONZALO MAYO

MAD VISIONS OF GROTESQUE EVILRIES BOILED, WRITHED FROM THE TREASURE CHEST. THE DEMON OF THE TREASURE CAVE TOWERED IN CHAOTIC MAGNIFICENCE ABOVE THE THIEF.
MORTAL PIG! WHAT VOMIT SUCKING THIEF STEALS AT MINE TREASURE?
NO! THIS CAN NOT BE!

IT CAN AND IS, MAGGOT LICKER! YOU HAVE FOUND THE DEMON RATHER THAN HIS RICHES! NOW... WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH HIM?

THERE ARE THIEVES IN MY TREASURE-HOUSE!
WHAT TREASURE-HOUSE, MY LORD WIZARD?
I KEEP A PRECIOUS THING HIDDEN WITHIN THE MOUNTAIN DIABLO. MY DEMON GUARDS IT THERE.

THERE UNTO MY TREASURETROVE COMES A THIEF TO STEAL MY RICHES!
HEAR ME, MY DEMON! HEAR THY MASTER!

THE OWNER OF MY TREASURE CALLS TO ME, THIEF!
THE MASTER BRINGS YOU GREETINGS... AND...

...DEATH!
YAARRR!

ALTHOUGH WRETCHED ALEDO WAS A POOR EXAMPLE OF DECENCY HE WAS VALUED COUSIN AND COMFORT AND SPY FOR KING ALPHONSO. MANY TIMES HAD LOWLY ALEDO SAVED THE DAY AT SPANISH COURT BY HIS WANDERING EYES AND EAR. WE CALLED ALEDO, NOT THIEF, BUT FRIEND. AGAIN THE KING NEEDED HIS SERVICES. EL CID WENT TO BRING HIM BACK. EL CID THUS JOURNEYED INTO THE LANDS OF MADNESS!

EVEN AS MY SQUIRE AND I LOOKED UPON A DREAD CASTLE IN THE DISTANCE, VIOLENT WINDS BEGAN TO BLOW!
THE EARTH SEEMED TO LOWER AND THE SKY ABOVE US WAS FRACTED! AND BEHOLD! A HOST OF TERROR FELL FROM THE NETHER, UPON US! GHASTLY VISAGES OF MONSTROUS WARRIORS AND REPTILIAN STEED BORE DIRECTLY UPON CID.
I TURNED TO MY SQUIRE! HE WAS GONE! I WAS ALONE!
WHETHER THE EARTH HAD SENT HIS BODY INTO A CREVICE OR HIS NERVE HAD FALTERED... FACED THE FROTHING KNIGHTS AS HELL ALONE, GRIPPED MY SWORD AND GAVE THEM VOICE OF MY BATTLECRY!
AND THEN FELL AMONGST THEM! THOUGH THESE VISIONS OF OUT WRAITHS, THEY BLED AND VOMITED RUPTURED INTESTINES AS MY SWORD SANG A FLAMING DIRGE!
WHIRLING, WRITHING, SILE... SPEWING TITANS SQUIRMED LIKE OOZING SALTED SNAILS AT THE BAY OF CID'S BLOOD-SLICKENED WRATH! THEY WERE LOATHE TO STAY THE BRAVE THE FIGHT!

THUS AS QUICKLY AS IT HAD BEGUN, IT WAS *ENDED*. MILES OF FESTERING, PUTRESCENT POURING GOBLINS LAY *QUIVERING* BENEATH MY MOUNT'S HOOVES.

DESCENDING FROM THAT UNHOLY PILE OF NOW *SLAIN DEAD*, I CONTINUED ON MY SEARCH FOR A THIEF.

ALTHOUGH I HAD NOW FOLLOWED THE ROLLY STREWN TRACKS OF WRETCHED ALEDO BUT ONE HUNDRED MILES, I WONDERED IF TRULY I WAS *YET* IN SPAIN OR... IN THE LANDS BEYOND THE WINDOWS OF *SANITY*. EVEN THE COUNTRYSIDE TOOK SHAPE OF *HELL INCARNATE*.

WHAT *DO* YE HERE IN THESE LANDS UNCLEAN, SOLDIER? HAVE YE COME TO *LOSE* THY *SOUL* TO THE VERY *EVIL* AROUND YOU?

OR HAVE YE LOST YOUR WAY... OR COME TO *ROB*?

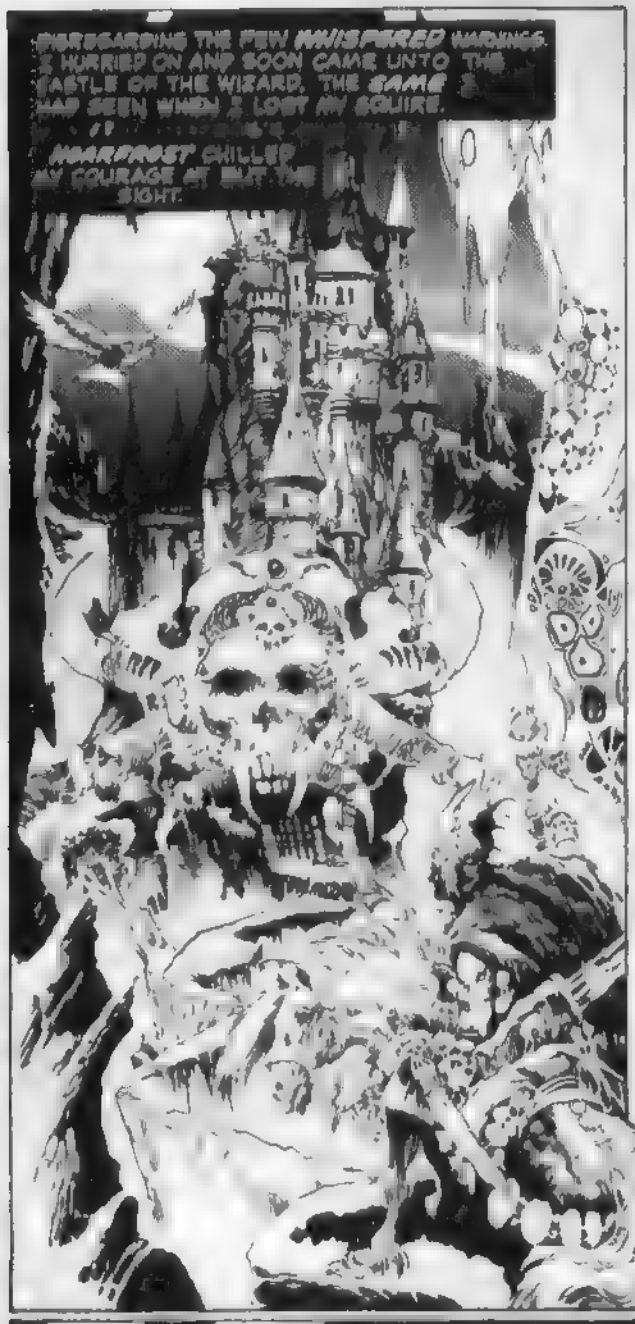
NEITHER. I SEEK A THIEF!

THEN I *WELCOME* YOU TO THE *LAND* OF THIEVES, MURDERERS, WHORES, MAGICIANS AND ALL THINGS *REBUKED* BY GOD... CURSE HIS *NAME*!

THIS THIEF, ALEDO... HE IS A PART TIME *SPY* IN BEHALF OF THE *KING'S* ARMIES. WE *NEED* HIS *HELP*. BUT ALEDO HAS COME THIS WAY ON A *PERSONAL JOURNEY*.

TO ROB THE FABLED TREASURES OF THE ANCIENT, EH?
YES.. SINCE WE SPEAK IN POINTED TERMS, ALEDO WAS DRUNK THE NIGHT HE BEGAN HIS TRAVELS. HE SAID HE SOUGHT THE... UMMM... THE DEMON'S TREASURE OR SOME SUCH MYTHICAL TROVE.
I SUSPECT IF I FIND THE DEMON'S TREASURE, I WILL FIND THERE MY THIEF.
THEN... BE PREPARED TO DARE THE UNKNOWN. FOR TO STAY FOR LONG IN REGIONS THUS CURSED PROVOKES A MIND TO INESCAPABLE MADNESS!
FOR NOTHING IS AS IT SEEMS HERE! THIS IS THE PLACE OF DEMENTIA, A HAUNTED WORLD OF HALF WROUGHT WRAITHS AND SHADES OF BLOOD BLACK NIGHT!
FIND THY THIEF THEN, SOLDIER! AND BE GONE!
FOR HERE A KINDLY OLD BEGGAR MAN MIGHT TRULY BE...
...A WIZARD KING!

THUS THE BEGGAR MAN WAS GONE, AND I LEFT ALONE TO FIND THE DEMON AND MY THIEF.
BUT... THERE WAS INDEED, TARRYING TO BE DONE.
ODD CIRCUMSTANCES WERE COMMONPLACE TO SOLDIERS.
SWEETNESS THERE WAS LITTLE OF IN THE WORLD. THUS, WHERE 'TIS FOUND, THERE IS IT TAKEN... AS SWEETLY AS GIVEN.
I REALIZED THE WINSOME GIRL WAS PUT THERE BY SOME HAND TO KEEP ME FROM MY TASK. IT GAVE ME SUBTLE PLEASURE TO TAKE THE BAIT, EAT IT AND SWIM AWAY FROM THE UNKNOWN FISHER. SECRETLY, I WAS RELIEVED SHE HAD NOT TURNED INTO A SERPENT AS EVEN I PENETRATED HER WARMTH.
WAIT, MY LOVER SOLDIER... WHERE WOULDST THOU BE GOING? STAY WITH ME... STAY WITH ME AND I SHALL MAKE THEE AN OBJECT OF PASSION'S ADORATION.
WHAT WE HAVE SHARED IS SWEET IN MY MEMORY NOW. I WILL KEEP IT SO. I HAVE ROADS TO TRAVEL.
TO FIND THE DEMON'S TREASURE? IT IS ONLY A PLACE OF LEGEND. NOT REAL. BUT... IT IS SAID THAT THE TREASURE IS OWNED BY THE WIZARD OF CASTLE DEL ILIBRE. A FEARSOME AND FELL PLACE
SOON, I FOUND A TINY HAMLET WHEREIN PEOPLE SEEMINGLY NORMAL DWELT. I TOLD THEM I WAS THE GIB AND THEY GAVE ME DUE RESPECT AND INFORMATION


DISREGARDING THE FEW WHISPERED WARNINGS, I HURRIED ON AND SOON CAME UNTO THE CASTLE OF THE WIZARD, THE SAME I HAD SEEN WHEN I LOST MY SQUIRE.
HOARFROST CHILLED MY COURAGE AT THAT THE SIGHT.

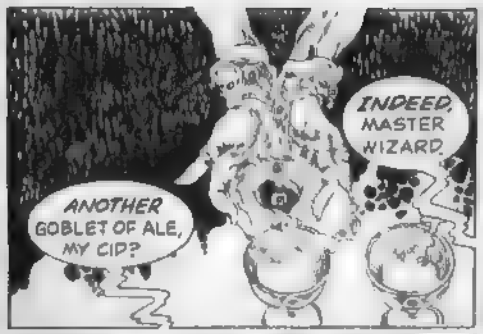
A SHIELD OF CHALLENGE HUNG BEFORE THE FORTRESS...! SILENTLY
NO NEED OF ANNOUNCING MY APPROACH.

A PROPHETIC ANALOGY FOR SOMETHING HUGE NOW MOVED IN THE MIST...!

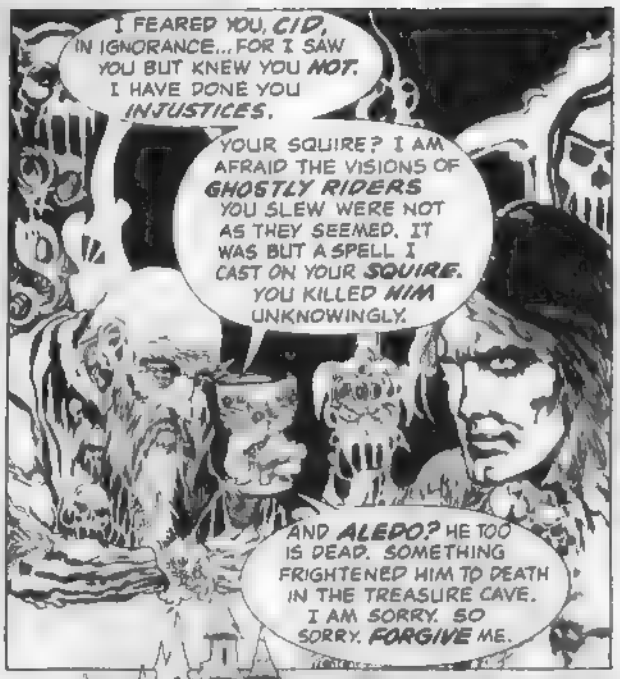
QUIET! HOLD, HORSE! HOLD! WHAT GRIPS YOU?
NEEHEEHEEEHEE

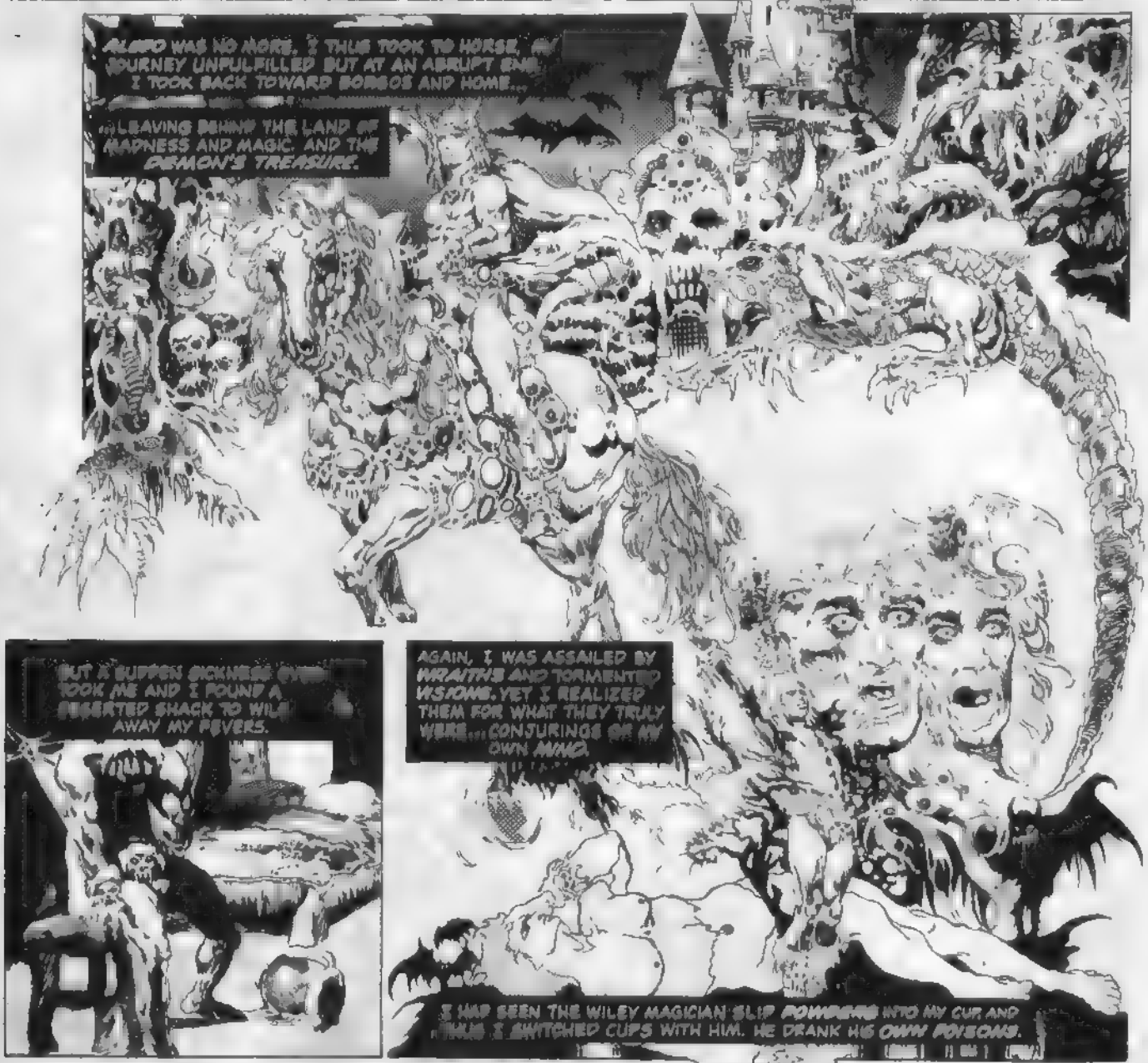
THE SOUND OF MY HORSE'S PANICKED NICKER HAD DRIVEN THE THING FORTH FROM THE FOGS! THAT THIS ONE WHO'S EXHALATION I BREATHED IN!
DRAGON! SLEEPING FITFULLY UPON A BED OF BONES OF THOSE WHO HAD CLANGORED THE CHALLENGE SHIELD!

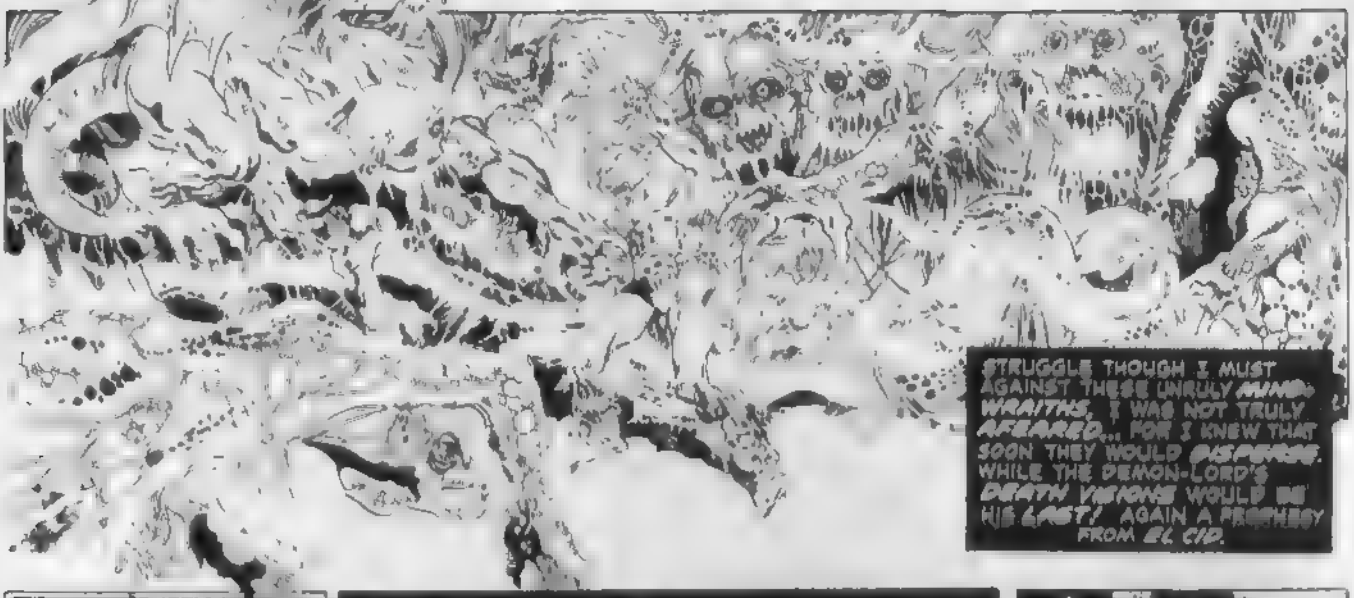
THE FELL BEAST WAS CAUGHT UNAWARES AND HAD JUST GROSSLY ROLLED TO ITS FEET TO TAKE FLIGHT UPON LEATHERN WINGS.
THIS ONE WOULD NOT KEEP ME FROM THE CASTLE! BEFORE THE LUMBERING MONSTER COULD STRIKE OUT I DID!
NOW! FIND HOME, MY SWORD! AND DIE GREAT WORM!
THE WRITHING COILS OF THE BEAST AT LAST WERE STILL.
I ENTERED THE MAD CASTLE. A YAWNING MAW GAPING TO WELCOME EL CID. STANDING BENEATH MON[illegible] TEETH WAS...
... THE BEGGAR KING!
AND YOU MUST SURELY REALIZE THAT THE DEMON GUARDS THE TREASURE WHICH BELONGS TO ME.
I WOULD THAT YE HAD LET ME PUT UP MY WATCHDOG RATHER THAN YOU KILLING HIM, SIR KNIGHT. BUT... A BRAVE DEED FINDS REWARDS
I AM SORRY, BUT I FEAR YOUR DOG HAD TOO FIERCE A BITE.
VERY MUCH. YOU MUST GIVE ME GARDENING TIPS.
SO, YOU FIND I AM NO BEGGAR MAN. I AM THE WIZARD OF THE CASTLE DEL ILIBRE!
WELL, COME AND WE'LL TALK. DO YOU ENJOY MY GARDEN?
SO, I NOW BELIEVE YOU ARE TRULY THE CID. IT IS GOOD TO HAVE YOU ENTER UNTO MY HOME AND I BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE NOT OUT TO PILFER MY TREASURE
ONLY TO BRING HOME MY SPY. I WILL RETURN EVERY LAST SPECK OF GOLD HE HAS STOLEN I ASSURE YOU.

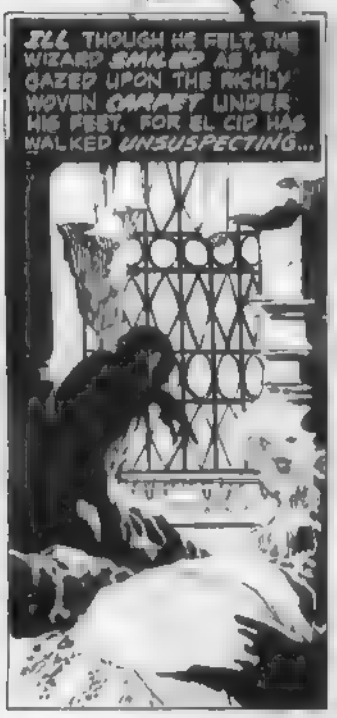

ANOTHER GOBLET OF ALE, MY CID?
INDEED, MASTER WIZARD.

I TOOK UP ANOTHER FLAGON OF DRINK AND QUAFFED IT MERRILY AS DID THE WIZARD.
THE REFRESHMENTS WERE HAVING HEADY EFFECTS FOR ME.


I FEARED YOU, CID, IN IGNORANCE... FOR I SAW YOU BUT KNEW YOU NOT. I HAVE DONE YOU INJUSTICES.
YOUR SQUIRE? I AM AFRAID THE VISIONS OF GHOSTLY RIDERS YOU SLEW WERE NOT AS THEY SEEMED. IT WAS BUT A SPELL I CAST ON YOUR SQUIRE. YOU KILLED HIM UNKNOWINGLY.
AND ALEDO? HE TOO IS DEAD. SOMETHING FRIGHTENED HIM TO DEATH IN THE TREASURE CAVE. I AM SORRY. SO SORRY. FORGIVE ME.


CID, I FOUND YOU THREATENING SO I SENT MAGICAL VISIONS TO SCARE YOU AWAY. I DID NOT THINK YOU WOULD FIGHT THEM AND WIN.
ALEDO WAS NO MORE. I THUS TOOK TO HORSE, MY JOURNEY UNFULFILLED BUT AT AN ABRUPT END. I TOOK BACK TOWARD BORGOS AND HOME...
...LEAVING BEHIND THE LAND OF MADNESS AND MAGIC. AND THE DEMON'S TREASURE.
BUT A SUDDEN SICKNESS OVER TOOK ME AND I FOUND A DESERTED SHACK TO WILE AWAY MY FEVERS.
AGAIN, I WAS ASSAILED BY WRAITHS AND TORMENTED WISIONS. YET I REALIZED THEM FOR WHAT THEY TRULY WERE... CONJURINGS OF MY OWN MIND.
I HAD SEEN THE WILEY MAGICIAN SLIP POWDERS INTO MY CUP AND THUS I SWITCHED CUPS WITH HIM. HE DRANK HIS OWN POISONS.


STRUGGLE THOUGH I MUST AGAINST THESE UNRULY MINDS WRAITHS, I WAS NOT TRULY AFEARED... FOR I KNEW THAT SOON THEY WOULD DISPERSE. WHILE THE DEMON-LORD'S DEATH VISIONS WOULD BE HIS LAST! AGAIN A PROPHECY FROM EL CID.

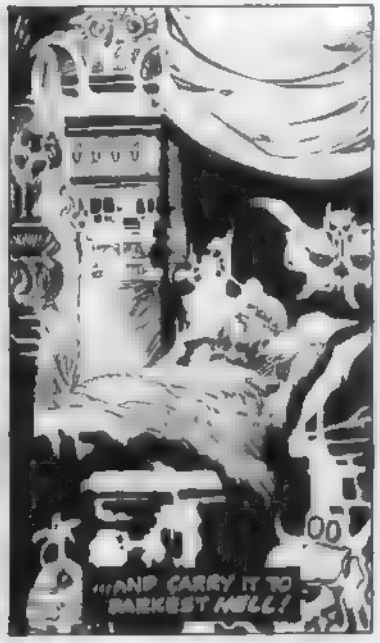

ILL THOUGH HE FELT, THE WIZARD SMILED AS HE GAZED UPON THE RICHLY WOVEN CARPET UNDER HIS FEET. FOR EL CID HAD WALKED UNSUSPECTING...

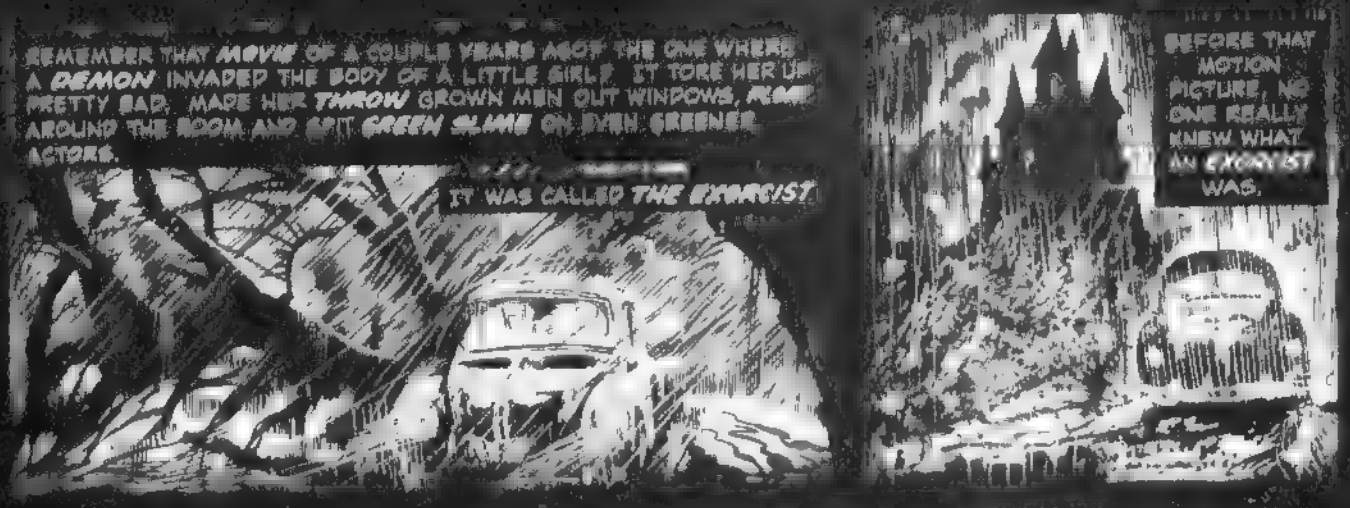
...UPON A CARPET WOVEN, WARP AND WOOF OF HUMAN SOULS... SOULS OF THOSE WHO HAD COME TO STEAL THE DEMON'S TREASURE AND HAD FALLEN UNDER THE DEMON'S SPELL. FROM THIS CARPET THE SORCERER DREW HIS POWER.
A SUDDEN SPASM OF PAIN WRACKED THE WIZARD...

...AND HE FELL, DYING!

...AND FALLING, WATCHED THE CARPET WRITHE BENEATH HIM, AND SAW THE SOULS OF THOSE IMPRISONED THERE REACH OUT...

...TO SNATCH HIS SOUL...


...AND CARRY IT TO DARKEST HELL!



MORDECAI MOONDOG

I, MYSELF, HAVE CAPITALIZED ON THE EXORCISM CRAZE. I REALIZE FROM IT A HEALTHIER LIVELIHOOD THAN I COULD EARN AS A SOUTHERN BAPTIST MINISTER IN SAY TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA.

BEFORE THE MOTION PICTURE THE WORLD WAS SANER. FEW BELIEVED IN DEVILS, DEMONS AND DRAGONS. I HAD LITTLE DIRECTION IN LIFE, AND EVEN LESS PURPOSE.

IT HAS ALLOWED ME TO DIVERT OTHERWISE USELESS NATURAL TALENT TOWARDS A MONETARILY REWARDING END.

I AM, FOR A PRICE, YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT, MORDECAI MOONDOG, EXORCIST!

SINCE THE MOVIE'S RELEASE, HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN A RASH OF DEMONIC POSSESSIONS. ALMOST ALL CAUSED BY MOVIE-GOERS' OVERACTIVE IMAGINATIONS.

A LOT OF JOHNNY-COME-LATELY EXORCISTS HAVE ARRIVED ON THE SCENE. WELL-MEANING PRIESTS HARBORING HOPELESS DELUSIONS OF SAINTHOOD, OUT-AND-OUT PITCH-TENT JIGABOOS, FRANCING THROUGH MOTIONS OF GOD-FEARSOME FAITH HEALING.

STORY: BILL DuBAY / ART: ESTEBAN MAROTO

I RECEIVED YOUR LETTER, MR. VON DAEMON, AND CAME AS QUICKLY AS I COULD.

I'VE A CERTAIN SKEPTICISM OF YOUR CLAIM TO A MANSE OCCUPIED BY SEVEN DEMONIC SPIRITS, HOWEVER

IT'S RARE THAT TWO OR MORE ENTITIES HAUNT A DWELLING SIMULTANEOUSLY, YET--!

YET, YOU CAME, MR. MOONDOG.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE HERE, YOU WILL BELIEVE, JUST AS I NOW BELIEVE. THIS CASTLE IS POSSESSED... AND BY PRECISELY THE NUMBER OF SOULS INDICATED!

YOU SEE, MR. MOONDOG, IT HAS BEEN MY FAMILY'S CASTLE FOR CENTURIES. I CAME UPON IT ONLY RECENTLY, WHEN A DISTANT COUSIN, THE LAST TRUE VON DAEMON PASSED ON.

SINCE LIVING HERE, I HAVE BEEN TROUBLED BY THE UNEASINESS WHICH PREVAILS WITHIN THESE WALLS.

THE CASTLE IS EMPTY, SAVE FOR MYSELF. YET AT PRECISELY SUNDOWN EACH NIGHT, FOOTFALLS MAY BE HEARD THROUGHOUT THE MANY ROOMS.

HIDEOUS SCREAMS AND GROANS OF PURE TERROR CONCLUDE IN A CRESCENDO OF RATTLING CHAINS, FLYING FURNITURE AND SLAMMING DOORS.

I HAVE DISCOVERED SEVERAL VOLUMES OF FAMILY HISTORY WHICH ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN THE HAUNTINGS... CHRONICLES OF THE INSANITY BY WHICH MY ANCESTORS LIVED

EACH EXHIBITED A PASSION FOR THE MACABRE.

I FEAR, MR. MOONDOG THAT THE MANSE ITSELF MAY HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ODD BEHAVIOR THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE WITHIN ITS WALLS.

IF IT IS NOT EXORCISED IMMEDIATELY, I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT I, TOO, WILL EMBRACE THE MORBID IDIOSYNCRACIES OF MY FOREBEARS.

IF YOU CAN TELL ME A LITTLE OF YOUR ANCESTRY, WE MIGHT GET TO THE ROOT OF YOUR TROUBLES, MR. VON DAEMON.

THE TURBULENCE SEEMS TO HAVE BEGUN WITH LORD SIGFRID VON DAEMON.

HE AND TWELVE OTHER MEMBERS OF A SATANIC COVEN USED THE SECLUDED MOOR SURROUNDING THIS CASTLE FOR DEVIL WORSHIP.

AFTER ONE BRIEF, VIOLENT RITE, LORD SIGFRID REPORTEDLY ACQUIRED THE ABILITY TO TRANSFORM HIS TWISTED SOUL INTO THE SHAPE OF A HIDEOUS DEMON.

WHILE IN THIS GNOME-LIKE FORM, SIGFRID DISPLAYED INCREDIBLY FEARSOME POWERS. HE LITERALLY DISSOLVED HIS COVEN SO THAT HIS NEWFOUND POWERS MIGHT REMAIN HIS SECRET ALONE.

SHORTLY AFTER, SIGFRID ERECTED THIS CASTLE. A MONUMENT TO THOSE PITIABLE SOULS HE HAD BETRAYED... WHO HAD SO IGNORANTLY HELPED HIM ATTAIN DEMONKIND.

THE ELIMINATION OF HIS COVEN WAS ONLY SIGFRID FIRST ACT OF VIOLENCE.

AFTER THAT, THE NEARBY VILLAGE WAS PLAGUED WITH A SERIES OF KIDNAPPINGS. ALL THE VICTIMS, YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL WOMEN.

THE FIRST ABDUCTED GIRL WAS HELGA GOEHRING. THE DEMON, LEAPED THROUGH HER SECOND-STORY BEDROOM WINDOW, AND CARRIED THE SCREAMING GIRL INTO THE NIGHT.

AT THIS UNHOLY ALTAR, HE INDULGED IN UNSPEAKABLE DEPRAVITIES. THEN HE SACRIFICED HER TO HIS GOD OF DARKNESS.

SEVEN MORE GIRLS DISAPPEARED
ENRAGED VILLAGERS, LED BY A BISHOP HIMMLER, FOLLOWED THE DEMON'S TRAIL. IT LED TO THIS CASTLE.
THE BISHOP BURST IN. HE FOUND THE DEMON-LORD HUNCHED OVER HIS LATEST VICTIM. A FIERCE BATTLE ENSUED... AND THE BISHOP SLEW HIM ON THIS VERY SPOT.
THE DEMON'S DEATH-STAINS REMAIN TO THIS DAY.
THE BISHOP, A STRONG, RELIGIOUS MAN, HAD DESTROYED THE DEMON. YET, THE BATTLE BROKE HIM.
HE DIED LATER THAT NIGHT, AFTER CONFESSING HIS UN-EASE. HE FEARED THE SPIRIT OF LORD SIGFRID MIGHT YET LINGER WITHIN THE CASTLE
AND IT MAY HAVE WELL BEEN SO.
FOR IN TRUTH, ONE OF THE GIRLS LORD SIGFRID ABDUCTED, HAD NOT BEEN SLAIN.
THE MAN-DEMON HAD EMBRACED HER AS HIS MATE. SHE WAS WITH CHILD WHEN THE BISHOP STORMED THE CASTLE... LURKING IN THE DUNGEON WHILE SIGFRID WAS DESTROYED.
SHE HID THERE FOR MONTHS AFTERWARDS, FEARING THE VILLAGERS WOULD RETURN AND KILL HER FOR THE VILE CREATURE SHE HAD BECOME.
ALONE IN THAT RANK, MUSTY CELLAR, THE GIRL BORE A SON, THE SECOND LORD OF VON DAEMON CASTLE...
... PIETER VON DAEMON.
HIS STORY IS MORE PITIABLE THAN HIS FATHER'S.
THE DEMON SEED FROM LORD SIGFRID PASSED STRANGE TRAITS ONTO THE SON... TRAITS WHICH LAY DORMANT IN HIS EARLY YEARS.
THE FRIGHTENED GIRL RAISED THE BOY IN THE DUNGEON AND SLOWLY SHE WENT INSANE.
PIETER GREW UP KNOWING NO HUMAN VOICE BUT THAT OF HIS OWN MAD MOTHER.
THERE IS NO TELLING WHAT DEPRAVITIES OCCURRED BETWEEN MOTHER AND SON IN THE SEVENTEEN YEARS THEY SPENT ALONE HERE.
WHEN HIS MOTHER DIED, PIETER WAS FORCED TO EITHER LEAVE THESE WALLS OR DIE FROM LACK OF FOOD. HERE HIS TALE TRULY BEGINS.
DESPITE HIS FORMATIVE ENVIRONMENT PIETER GREW INTO A STRAIGHT, HANDSOME MAN. HE LEFT THESE QUARTERS WITH ONLY TWO UNUSUAL TASTES.
FIRST... AN UNLIMITED DESIRE FOR FEMALE COMPANIONSHIP. AND SECOND AN INSATIABLE HUNGER FOR FRESH, WARM MAMMALIAN BLOOD.
ONE CAN ONLY SPECULATE HOW THE YOUTH CAME BY EITHER LUST. HIS MOTHER, NO DOUBT HAD SHOWN HIM THE PLEASURES OF LOVE. WHILE THE DEMON SEED OF HIS FATHER SURELY ACCOUNTED FOR HIS PECULIAR NUTRITIONAL NEEDS.

WITH THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER, PIETER TIMIDLY **CREPT** FROM THESE PASSAGES.

WHILE MIRACULOUSLY HANDSOME, THE YOUTH WAS **PALE-SKINNED** AND **HYGIENICALLY** RETARDED. AN OLD VILLAGER FOUND HIM FORAGING FOR THE SMALL GAME WHOSE BLOOD HE SO DESPERATELY **NEEDED**.

HE TOOK PIETER INTO HIS HOME, AND CARED FOR HIM AS HIS OWN SON.

PIETER WAS WITH THE OLD MAN'S FAMILY ONLY A SHORT TIME, WHEN THE FIRST LOCAL FARM ANIMALS WERE FOUND HANGING BY THEIR HINDQUARTERS, THEIR THROATS CUT, AND **DRAINED** OF **BLOOD**.

THEN, A GIRL FROM THE VILLAGE WAS DISCOVERED HANGING FROM A SECLUDED TREE. **SHE**, HOWEVER, HAD BEEN PHYSICALLY **MOLESTED** BEFORE SHE WAS SLAUGHTERED.

THE OLD MAN, WORRIED AFTER HIS **OWN** DAUGHTER DISAPPEARED, HE WAS WALKING NEAR THE **CASTLE VON DAEMON** WHEN HE HEARD HER PITIABLE SCREAMS. HE FOUND HER **HANGING** BY HER FEET IN THE DUNGEON.

PIETER WAS KNEELING BESIDE HER NUDE BODY, ABOUT TO SLIT HER THROAT WITH A RAZOR SHARP **AXE** BLADE

THE BOY TRIED TO FLEE, BUT THE OLD MAN **SLEW** PIETER WITH HIS OWN AXE.

ONLY AFTER HE CUT HIS DAUGHTER DOWN DID HE NOTICE THE BLOOD-DRAINED BODIES OF FOUR **OTHER** GIRLS.

WHEN QUESTIONED, THE DAUGHTER TEARFULLY ADMITTED GOING TO THE MANSE WITH **PIETER**

SHE MADE LOVE TO HIM BEFORE HE SPRANG UPON HER WITH A FAR **DIFFERENT HUNGER** IN HIS EYES.

THE GIRL WAS IN HER THIRD MONTH OF **PREGNANCY** WHEN HER FATHER SENT HER AWAY TO A **CONVENT**.

THE **CHILD** SHE BORE WAS **IVAR**, THE **THIRD** VON DAEMON TO BE CURSED BY THIS CASTLE.

IVAR WAS A VERY DIFFERENT VON DAEMON. HE REMAINED WITH HIS MOTHER AT THE CONVENT UNTIL HE WAS **FOUR**...

...WHEN HE WAS TAKEN UNDER TUTELAGE BY THE NOTED SURGEON, **DR. HANTZ CONREID**.

ABNORMALITIES IN THE BOY'S PERSONALITY DID NOT MANIFEST THEMSELVES IN HIS EARLY LIFE. HE SEEMED QUITE **NORMAL**.

HE GREW INTO AN EXCELLENT **SCHOLAR**, ATTENDED THE FINEST UNIVERSITIES, AND AT THE SIDE OF HIS GUARDIAN, BECAME THE MOST BRILLIANT **SURGEON** IN EUROPE

IVAR MARRIED **DR. CONREID'S** DAUGHTER, WHOM HE LOVED DEARLY. **TOGETHER**, THE THREE RETIRED FOR STUDIES TO THE SECLUSION OF IVAR'S FAMILY **MANSE**.

IVAR WATCHED DR. CONRIED AND HIS OWN WIFE GROW **OLDER**, WHILE HE REMAINED A VIGOROUS **YOUNG MAN**. AFTER ALL, HIS GRANDFATHER'S DEMON BLOOD FLOWED IN HIS VEINS. IVAR CONCLUDED, AFTER EXTENSIVE TESTS, THAT HE WAS **IMMORTAL**.

HIS OWN **FATHER**, NO DOUBT, HAD THE SAME INHERENT ADVANTAGE, BUT WAS SLAIN TOO EARLY IN LIFE TO HAVE **NOTICED** IT.

IVAR, WITH THE AID OF DR. CONRIED, TRIED DESPERATELY TO **DUPLICATE** THOSE ELEMENTS OF HIS BLOOD WHICH **RETARDED** AGING. THEIR WORK WAS TO **NO AVAIL**.

YET IVAR PERSISTED IN TRYING TO PASS HIS IMMORTALITY ON TO OTHERS. THEN VILLAGERS BROUGHT HIM AN **OLD MAN**... WHOSE **LEGS** HAD BEEN **MANGLED** IN A CARRIAGE ACCIDENT.

IVAR HIT UPON THE IDEA OF **EXCHANGING** HIS PERFECT LEGS FOR THOSE OF THE MANGLED OLD **PEASANT**.

THE LIMBS CONTAINING IVAR'S **IMMORTALITY FACTOR** MIGHT INDEED **PASS** THE RESISTANCE TO AGE ON TO THE OLD MAN.

DR. CONRIED OPERATED IMMEDIATELY. WHEN HE WAS FINISHED, THE OLD MAN WALKED AWAY WITH HEALTHY, **VIGOROUS** LIMBS.

AND IVAR SUSPECTED THAT HIS **OWN** SUPERIOR SYSTEM WOULD **MEND** THE CRIPPLED LEGS THAT WERE TO BE GRAFTED ONTO **HIS** BODY

AND IVAR WAS CONFINED TO A WHEELCHAIR WITH THE LEGS OF A **CRIPPLED** OLD MAN.

NO ONE KNEW IF THE OPERATION GRANTED THE OLD MAN IMMORTALITY. FOR SOON AFTER, HE WAS MURDERED BY A YOUNG FELLOW HE HAD BEATEN IN A FOOTRACE.
THE TWISTED LIMBS OF IVAR NEVER MENDED HE WAS CONFINED TO A WHEELCHAIR AND NEVER AGAIN LEFT THIS CASTLE
UNDAUNTED, HE CONTINUED HIS EXPERIMENTS. DR CONREID GRAFTED MORE OF HIS BODY PARTS ONTO AILING PATIENTS.
THE OLD SURGEON REPLACED IVAR'S ARMS, KIDNEYS, LUNGS, HEART, AN EYE AND AN EAR
THE PITIFUL, IMMORTAL IVAR WAS REDUCED TO A JIGSAWED COLLECTION OF SCAR TISSUE.
AND TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, HIS REPLACED ORGANS WERE AGING. ONLY THOSE ORIGINALLY HIS OWN STAYED YOUTHFUL... IMMORTAL
WHEN DR. CONRIED DIED, NO MORE TRANSPLANTS COULD BE MADE BUT THEN THERE WAS HARDLY ANYTHING LEFT FOR IVAR TO GIVE.
WHEN IVAR'S WIFE DIED, HE WAS LEFT ALONE IN THE CASTLE, A TOTALLY USELESS BODY, OF TWISTED, DISEASED, LIFELESS LIMBS
IT WAS MONTHS LATER WHEN TWO HUNTERS HEARD MOANS EMANATING FROM THE MANSE. THEY DISCOVERED IVAR'S PARTIALLY DECOMPOSED BODY SPRAWLED IN HIS WHEELCHAIR
ATOP THE BODY, WAS IVAR'S STILL YOUTHFUL, HANDSOME LIVING HEAD PITIABLY BEGGING THE HUNTERS TO END HIS MISERY WITH A BULLET IN THE BRAIN.
THEY DID SO.
THE BODY HAD DIED... YET IVAR'S HEAD, ALL THAT REMAINED HIS OWN, WAS UNDENIABLY IMMORTAL.
THEN IVAR WAS THE LAST VON DAEMON?
NOT SO, MY FRIEND
EARLY IN THEIR MARRIAGE, IVAR'S WIFE BORE HIM A SON AND A DAUGHTER.
THE FIRST BORN OF THE TWO CHILDREN WAS ROALD.
BECAUSE OF CERTAIN PECULIARITIES, THE CHILDREN WERE SENT TO A SPECIAL HOME AT AN EARLY AGE
THE FAMILY BLOOD FLOWED STRONGLY IN ROALD'S VEINS. LIKE HIS GREAT GRANDFATHER, HE COULD WILL HIMSELF INTO THE SHAPE OF A SMALL DEMON CREATURE... WITH SOME DIFFERENCES.
A THIN LAYER OF MATTED FUR WOULD COVER ROALD'S BODY AS IT SHRANK IN SIZE.
WHEN THE TRANSFORMATION WAS COMPLETE, HE LOOKED MORE ANIMAL THAN HUMAN. HE HAD AN ANIMAL'S TASTE FOR RAW, DEAD MEAT, AS WELL...
...PREFERABLY HUMAN MEAT!
ROALD'S PARENTS PAID EXTRAVAGANT FEES TO THE SPECIAL SCHOOL THAT RAISED THEIR CHILDREN. IT WAS A SCHOOL OF TWO ROALD AND HIS SISTER WERE THE ONLY WARDS
THE SCHOOL CATERED TO THE CHILDREN'S NEEDS AND TAUGHT THEM WELL TO MASK ANY "PECULIARITIES."
BECAUSE OF HIS EDUCATION, ROALD WAS ABLE TO LIVE MOST OF HIS EARLY LIFE UNDETECTED FOR WHAT HE WAS... A FLESH-EATING DEMON.
ROALD AND HIS SISTER HAD GROWN INTO ADULTHOOD WHEN THEY HEARD OF THEIR FATHER'S DEATH. IT WAS THEN THAT THEY RETURNED TO THE FAMILY MANSE.
ONCE WITHIN CASTLE VON DAEMON, ROALD COULD NOT CONTROL HIS URGE FOR LONG. HE RESIDED HERE FOR THREE SHORT YEARS WHEN IT AND ITS VIEW OF THIS VILLAGE CEMETERY PROVED HIS UNDOING.
ROALD'S HUNGER BECAME AN OBSESSION. AT NIGHT, HE WOULD TRANSFORM HIMSELF INTO THE SMALL, IMMENSELY POWERFUL DEVIL-BEING. HE'D LEAP FROM THE CASTLE TURRETS ONTO ONE OF THESE NEW TING GRAVES...
...AND, CLAWING AT THE DIRT WITH HIS BARE HANDS, WOULD UNEARTH A CASKET. AND BEGIN TO CHEW ON WHATEVER APPETIZING MORSEL IT PRESENTED

IT CONTINUED FOR YEARS. HIS SISTER, ***UNABLE*** OR ***UNWILLING*** TO HALT ROALD'S ACTIONS.

IT WAS NIGHT AND STORMING WHEN ROALD LEAPED FROM THE CASTLE WALLS, FOR THE ***FINAL*** TIME, AND BEGAN ***TEARING*** AT AN OLD VILLAGER'S GRAVE.

THE CASKET CONTAINED, TO ROALD'S HORROR, A A TOTALLY ***DECOMPOSED*** CORPSE... WITH ***HANDS*** AS PERFECTLY ***PRESERVED***... AS YOUNG AND POWERFUL... AS THOSE OF A TWENTY YEAR OLD.

SUDDENLY, THE HANDS ***RIPPED LOOSE*** FROM THE ROTTED CORPSE, AND ***SPRANG*** FOR POOR ROALD'S THROAT.

THE STRONG FINGERS DID NOT RELEASE THEIR GRIP UNTIL ***LIFE*** HAD BEEN TOTALLY ***STRANGLED*** FROM THE FLESH-EATING DEMON.

THE HANDS THEN ***SCAMPERED*** INTO THE WOODS, THE MUSCULAR FINGERS RACING IN A MAD PARODY OF HUMAN LEGS.

THE HANDS, OF COURSE, WERE ROALD'S ***FATHER'S***... IVAR'S HANDS, GRAFTED ONTO A VILLAGER WHO HAD ***SEVERED*** HIS OWN.

IVAR'S MINDLESS HANDS COULD NOT REALIZE WHO THEY WERE ***KILLING***. THEY SIMPLY ***GRABBED*** AT MOVEMENT AND CLUNG DESPERATELY TILL ALL MOTION ***STOPPED***.

OUT OF ***JEALOUSY*** SHE TURNED, IN EARLY CHILDHOOD, TO ***WITCHCRAFT*** AND ***DEMONOLOGY***.

SHE HOPED, THROUGH THE ***OCCULT***, TO ATTAIN EVEN ***GREATER*** POWERS THAN ROALD.

THE HANDS WERE ***IMMORTAL***... AND PROBABLY, ALONG WITH MANY OTHER PARTS OF IVAR'S BODY, ***CREEPING*** ABOUT SOMEWHERE IN THE WORLD TODAY.

ILONA ***BURIED*** ROALD IN THE VERY CASKET HE HAD UNEARTHED. SHE CONCEALED HIS HIGHLY UNUSUAL DEMISE, FOR SHE HERSELF WAS GIFTED WITH VON DAEMON BLOOD, AND HAD MUCH TO ***HIDE***.

AND WHAT OF ROALD'S ***SISTER***?

IMMORTALITY WAS ILONA'S. YET SHE DID NOT HAVE HER BROTHER'S ABILITY TO ***CHANGE SHAPE***.

AND BECAUSE OF THAT, SHE ***ENVIED*** HIM

ILONA STUDIED EVERY WORK AVAILABLE ON THE ***SATANIC ARTS***.

IT WAS ***SHE*** WHO CREATED THIS EXTENSIVE ***LIBRARY***.

AFTER HER BROTHER'S DEATH, ILONA DESERTED HER ORIGINAL LUST FOR ***POWER*** AND BEGAN ***CONJURING*** THE ***DEMONIC HIERARCHY*** THOSE DEMONS WHOSE POWERS ***RULE*** THE DARKNESS OF ***HELL***.

THE LORDS OF EVIL WERE AT HER COMMAND. AND ONE BY ONE, ILONA *SEDUCED* THEM.

BALAM, ASTAROTH, BELIAL, AHRIMAN, BELPHEGOR, BELZEBUB, ASMODEUS... THEY WERE ONLY A FEW TO WHOM ILONA OFFERED *PLEASURE*.

ILONA SOUGHT THE ULTIMATE *THRILL*, AND FOUND THAT, BECAUSE OF HER DEMONIC LINEAGE, COULD *MATE* WITH THE *ULTIMATE* PLEASURE-GIVERS... SATAN'S OWN MINIONS.

YET, ILONA WENT *TOO FAR* IN HER QUEST FOR THE ULTIMATE SENSATION.

ONE EVIL NIGHT, SHE SUCCEEDED IN CONJURING *SATAN* HIMSELF!

SHE *ENTICED* THE DEVIL WITH HER SUPPLE BODY. *TEASED* HIM.

FINALLY, EVEN *SATAN* COULD NOT REFUSE THE TEMPTATION OF ILONA'S ALLURING BODY. IN A FRENZY OF PASSION HE *LEAPED* AT HER.

THEIRS WAS THE MOST PASSIONATE AND DEPRAVED ACT OF LOVE EVER TO OCCUR IN OR OUT OF *HELL*.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN, FOR WHEN SATAN EXPLODED IN ECSTASY, *NOTHING* REMAINED OF ILONA SAVE FOR BLOODY *DRIPPINGS* ON A GORE-SPATTERED WALL.

SATAN RETURNED TO HELL WITH A WICKED GRIN. THE MASTER TRICKSTER HAD BEEN CLEVERLY BAITING ILONA ALL ALONG. HE TOOK HER *SOUL* WITH HIM TO HELL THAT NIGHT

ILONA HAD FOUND THE ULTIMATE PLEASURE. AND IT COST HER HER *LIFE*.

BUT YEARS BEFORE, ILONA HAD BORNE A *SON*. TAMAS... THE LAST *TRUE* VON DAEMON.

HE WAS FATHERED BY ONE OF ILONA'S *DEMON* LOVERS?

NO. TAMAS WAS BORN *BEFORE* HER HELLISH INDISCRETIONS. WHEN HE WAS CONCEIVED ILONA LIVED *ALONE* HERE... EXCEPT FOR HER BROTHER, *ROALD*.

THE BOY WAS *EIGHT* YEARS OF AGE WHEN HE DISCOVERED HIS MOTHER'S GORY REMAINS

HE FOUND IT IN A YOUNG VILLAGE GIRL, *VELMA HEGEL*.

SHE *HUGGED* THE HYSTERICAL BOY TO HER BOSOM, QUELLED HIS FEARS, QUIETED HIS SCREAMS...

LIKE A TRULY FRIGHTENED CHILD, HE RAN, *SCREAMING* FROM THE CASTLE... LOOKING ANYWHERE FOR *HELP*.

...AND WHEN HE TOLD WHAT HAD HAPPENED, CAME WITH HIM TO THE CASTLE TO SEE FOR HERSELF, THE HORROR OF WHICH THE BOY SPOKE.

TAMAS BROUGHT VELMA TO HIS MOTHER'S *BEDCHAMBERS*... SHOWED HER THE GORE-SPLATTERED WALL...

...AND, AS THE GIRL STOOD TRANSFIXED IN HORROR, TAMAS *SMASHED* HER ACROSS THE SKULL WITH A METAL LANTERN

THE BOY DRAGGED VELMA TO HIS "PLAYROOM," WHERE FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS, HE SUBMITTED HER TO TORMENTS OF *RACK*, *IRON MAIDEN* AND EVER-POPULAR *PENDELUM*.

TAMAS, POOR CHILD, UNORTHODOX THOUGH HIS UPBRINGING WAS, HAD NEVER BEFORE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO "EXPERIMENT" WITH A *LIVE* HUMAN BEING.

VELMA WAS THE BOY'S *FIRST*, AND TAMAS REVELLED IN HER SCREAMS AS HE METICULOUSLY PUT HER THROUGH THE TORMENTS OF HIS OWN LITTLE *HELL*.

IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE VELMA WAS MISSED. THE VILLAGERS, SUPERSTITIOUS AND WARY FROM THE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE VON DAEMON'S, KNEW ***EXACTLY*** WHERE TO LOOK FOR HER

AN ANGRY MOB BURST INTO THE CASTLE. THEY FOUND VELMA ***STRIPPED*** AND ***CHAINED*** TO A CELLAR WALL. TOMAS, LIKE THE HIDEOUSLY TWISTED DEMON DWARF THAT HE WAS, WAS CARVING OBSCENITIES ON HER SOFT SKIN WITH A WHITE-HOT ***BRANDING IRON!***

IN UNISON, THE MEN ***ATTACKED***, BUT THE BOY WAS A TRUE VON DAEMON. HE FOUGHT ***FURIOUSLY***, WITH THE STRENGTH OF A ***DOZEN*** MEN

HE WAS FINALLY KNOCKED ***UN-CONSCIOUS*** WITH HIS OWN BRANDING IRON.

THE MEN ***NAILED*** TOMAS UPSIDE DOWN TO A MAKESHIFT ***CROSS***... THEN MOUNTED THE CROSS TO THE TALLEST TURRET OF THIS CASTLE... FOR ALL THE VILLAGE TO SEE

THE BOY'S FINAL WORDS WERE A BITTER ***CURSE***. HE PROMISED TO ***RETURN*** AND PLAGUE THE CASTLE AS A DISEMBODIED ***SPECTRE***.

TOMAS VON DAEMON R.I.P.

SO EACH OF THE SIX VON DAEMONS DIED ***WITHIN*** THIS VERY CASTLE YET YOU SAID THERE WERE ***SEVEN*** SPIRITS WHICH HAUNT THE HOUSE

DON'T TELL ME ***YOU*** ARE THE MISSING SPECTRE, MR. VON DAEMON?

DON'T BE ***ABSURD***, MY FRIEND.

THESE ARE THE FINAL ENTITIES...

...IMPRISONED AS ONE, WITHIN THIS MIRROR. THE SOULS OF SIGFRID VON DAEMON'S ORIGINAL ***WITCH COVEN***...TRAPPED THERE CENTURIES AGO BY THE DEMON LORD HIMSELF!

BEWARE OF SPIRITS!

INCREDIBLE!

SO THERE YOU ***HAVE*** IT, MR MOONDOG... THE ***HISTORY*** OF CASTLE VON DAEMON.

THERE IS ONLY ***ONE*** THING MORE I MUST ***SHOW*** YOU.

THE FAMILY CHRONICLES CLAIM THAT THE DEMONS WHICH POSSESS THIS CASTLE ***DWELL*** WITHIN THE VERY ***PORTRAITS*** YOU HAVE SEEN.

BUT THIS IS ONE LEGEND I CAN PROVE ***FALSE***.

FOR HOW CAN SIX RESTLESS DEMONIC SOULS DWELL ON ***CANVAS*** WHEN I HAVE ***SEEN*** THEM WITH MY OWN EYES...

...IN THIS VERY ROOM.

SO! THE ELUSIVE DEMONS APPEAR! I AM MOST IMPRESSED, MR. VON DAEMON IT DOES INDEED MAKE ONE SUSPECT THAT SEVEN SOULS POSSESS YOUR MANSE.

BUT I'M NOT BUYING THE ACT, SIGFRID.

N-NO... THESE ARE GHOSTS... THE SPIRITS OF MY ANCESTORS.

BUNK! YOU'VE CREATED AN ILLUSION FOR ME, SIGFRID. THERE ARE NO MORE SEVEN SOULS POSSESSING THIS CASTLE THAN MY NAME IS MOONDOG.

IT IS SIGFRID VON DAEMON, IS IT NOT? THE DEMON-CREATURE WHO SIRED THIS ILL-BEGOTTEN FAMILY.

THE TRAPPED SOULS OF YOUR COVEN WORKED ONE LAST SPELL EVEN WHILE IMPRISONED IN YOUR MIRROR. THEY "INSPIRED" YOUR DECENDANTS TO NAME THEIR OFFSPRING AS THEY DID AS SUBTLE CLUE... TO THE REAL MENACE WITHIN THIS HOUSE.

THE IMPRISONED SOULS WARNED ME... BEWARE OF SPIRIT! BEWARE OF...

...SIGFRID. PIETER IVAR. ROALD ILONA. TOMAS.

THEIR COLLECTIVE INITIALS SPELL SPIRIT, SIGFRID. ONE SPIRIT. NOT SEVEN.

YOURS!

NO, YOU DID NOT FOOL ME, SIGFRID. JUST AS I COULD NOT TRICK YOU.

NATURAL ENEMIES CAN SMELL EACH OTHER. EVEN BEYOND DEATH!

SOMEHOW YOU DISCOVERED MY SECRET. YOU LEARNED THAT THE BISHOP WHO SLEW YOU IN THIS VERY MANSE, MORDECAI HIMMLER, HAD BARTERED HIS SOUL, JUST AS YOU SOLD YOURS.

ONLY THE GOOD BISHOP OFFERED HIMSELF TO HEAVEN WHILE YOU EMBRACED THE SATANIC LORDS OF HELL.

THE BISHOP DIDN'T DIE THE NIGHT HE SLEW YOU. IT WAS A COVERUP... SO NO ONE WOULD SUSPECT THAT HE TOO HAD BEEN GRANTED IMMORTALITY.

IT TOOK YOU CENTURIES TO FIGURE OUT... CENTURIES MORE TO TRACK THE BISHOP DOWN... CENTURIES IN WHICH YOUR POOR BEFUDDLED SPIRIT ROAMED RESTLESSLY IN THIS CASTLE, VOWING VENGEANCE.

AT LAST YOU FOUND ME... LURED ME HERE... AND NOW, YOU FACE OLD BISHOP HIMMLER HIMSELF, ALIAS MORDECAI MOONDOG, EXORCIST.

BUT THIS TIME, SIGFRID, IT'S NOT EVEN A CONTEST.

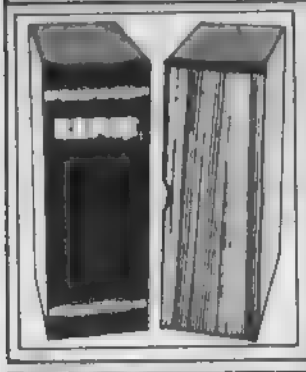
FOR HOW CAN A MERE SPIRIT EXPECT TO STAND THE ASSAULT OF AN ACCOMPLISHED EXORCIST WITH CENTURIES OF EXPERIENCE.

A SIMPLE WAVE OF MY HAND AND THE SPIRIT OF SIGFRID VON DAEMON WAS NO MORE. IT HAD DISSIPATED INTO GASEOUS NOTHINGNESS, RELEGATING HIS CONDEMNED SOUL TO THE ETERNAL FIRES OF HELL.

AS FOR ME, MORDECAI MOONDOG, I SIMPLY WENT ON TO MY NEXT ASSIGNMENT. A LITTLE OLD LADY IN OKEFENOKEE, GEORGIA WAS CLAIMING THAT THE SPIRIT OF THE MARQUIS DE SADE HAD TAKEN UP RESIDENCE IN HER ATTIC.

I DOUBTED IT BUT I HAD LITTLE ELSE TO DO WITH THE TIME MY IMMORTALITY GAVE ME.

SAVE YOUR EERIE



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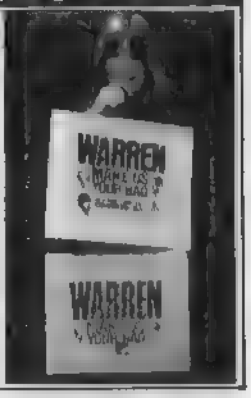

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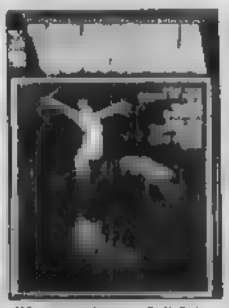

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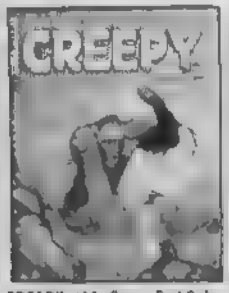

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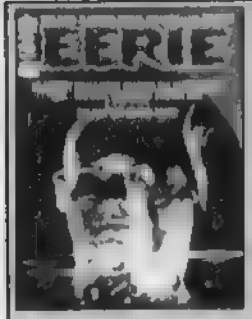

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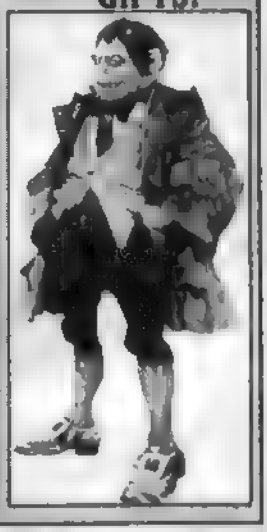

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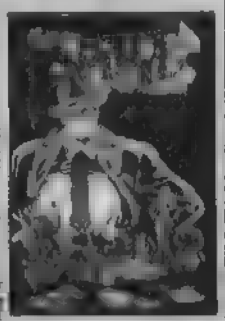

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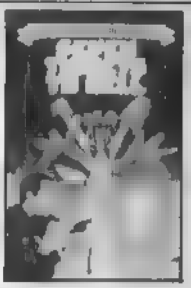

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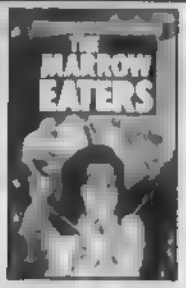

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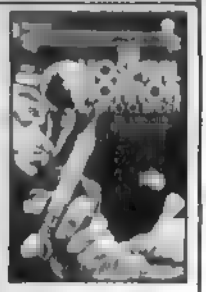

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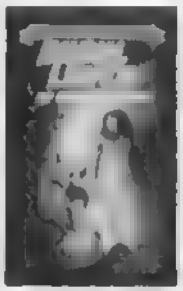

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GIGANTIC INSECT HOBBY KITS!

This isn't just another plastic hobby kit! It's an incredibly realistic series of devastating destruction that you can put together in diarama form. Full color, easy-to-assemble background, buildings, cars, figures, and of course, your terrifying Gigantic Insect all burst forth from their crush-resistant packages! All four Gigantics are scientifically accurate and highly detailed models enlarged several times their normal size. Fun and learning combine when you read about the natural history of these insects and see the biological charts. Paint them yourself in gruesome colors. Be prepared for the creepy-crawly invasion!

RAMPAGING SCORPION

The headline on the Daily Press reads "Thousands Flee From Rampaging Scorpion!" But you won't flee from this 7-inch Arachnid Scorpionida because you built it yourself. If you paint it in true bloody reddish-brown colors, even your friends will run in fear of a poisonously fatal sting wound! The easy-to-set-up scene depicts this public enemy in the midst of demolishing a brick building with its massive tail, squashing a vehicle and rendering able-bodied citizens virtually helpless against this staggering creature. Order #24136/$3.00

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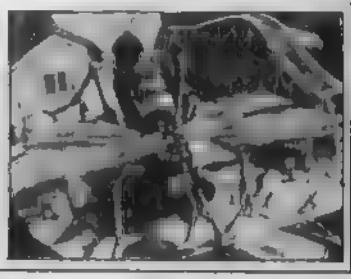
Remember the antagonist from the horrifying movie, "The Spider?" Well, our Huge Tarantula is his cousin and you can own all 6 terrifying inches of it! See him haul his mammoth mass of molecular madness across a free-standing power station. Having escaped from his usual habitat in Tropical America, the Eurypelma Californicum is baffled by the metal maze he finds himself in and lashes out against his surroundings in a vain effort to escape! The employees depart in haste, smokestacks roar and sparks fly! You won't miss by ordering #24139/$3.00

GIGANTIC WASP

Picture a sunny afternoon at the Funland Amusement Park. The children wave gaily at their parents from the roller coaster and the Funhouse. Suddenly a gigantic winged aviator menaces the skies and descends upon its unsuspecting victims, flapping powerful opaque wings and dropping a leaden thorax upon the pavement. The crowd disperses in every direction but for some it is too late! The omniscient compound eye spies a young man whose last whisper yields "Hymenopterous!" Translated as Gigantic Wasp, your model measures 6 inches in length and has an 8-inch wickedly wide wingspan. #24138/$3.00



HUGE MANTIS

Usually a friend to the farmer, this Stagmomantis becomes an enemy of the city worker! Having grown to preposterous proportions due to a stroke from a strange ray from outer space, the Colossal Mantis traverses the Main Street of an industrial town to wreak havoc on the populace. Destruction is rampant as the insidious insect searches for food. The railroad and passengers are doomed as they cross the creature's path. Buildings are ablaze; there will be no hope until the giant bug is blasted! A 6"x6" mantis and all parts to build this diarama are included #24137/$3.00

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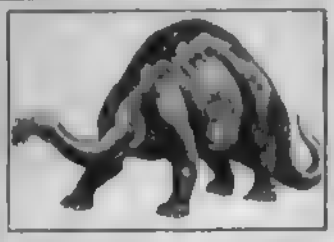
MOVING MECHANICAL PREHISTORIC ANIMAL HOBBY KITS

WIND-UP MOTOR INCLUDED
NO BATTERIES NEEDED

The mighty behemoth roars! And it is answered by a challenging bellow. Two mighty prehistoric beasts charge. There is a clash as the two meet, teeth to teeth, claw to claw. Is this a scene from the latest Harryhausen film? No! It is a battle of moving monsters created from heavy duty, quality plastic and brought to life by your skill. Eight terrific kits! Eight moving marvels! Each comes complete with all the parts and instructions for assembly. A wind-up motor is included. Simply construct the figure, attaching the motor to the arms and legs as outlined. Then wind the key. The motor does the rest. Your miniature monster lurches forward and stalks across the room. The motor emits a lifelike roar. Each is approximately 10' from nose to tail. Own a herd! Each $3.50.



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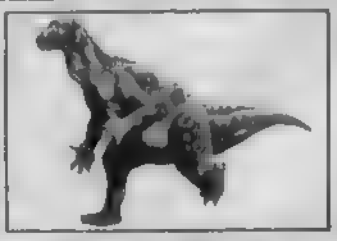

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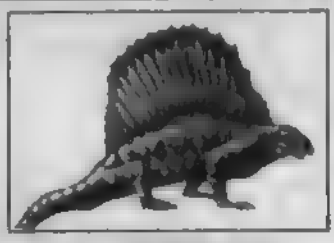

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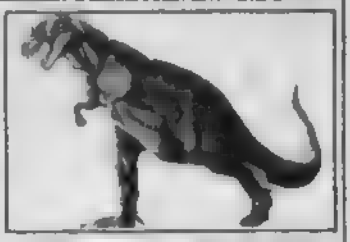

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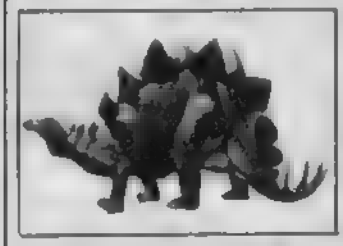

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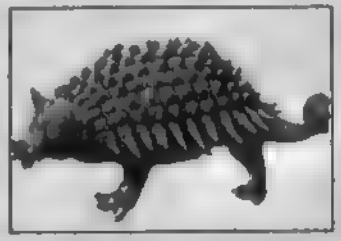

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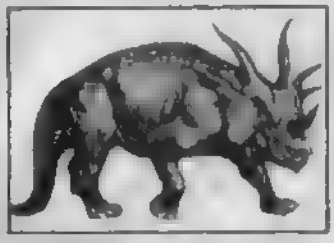

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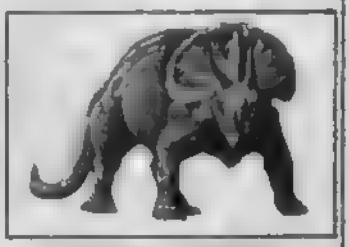

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FAMOUS MONSTERS 1975 CONVENTION POSTER

ATTENTION: COLLECTORS! A 27"x20" POSTER! FULL COLOR! FIVE MONSTERS!

Mummy Frankenstein Wolfman Dracula Reptile. Together for the first time Giant sized. In full color On the 1975 Famous Monsters Convention poster This 27"x20" poster will lure hundreds of monster fans to New York in 1975. It announces the monsterific event of the year November 7th, 8th and 9th of 1975 will bring you a Hammer Film festival Monster movie celebrities Costume parades Displays. Exhibits And this is the poster that will stun them with its vibrant color Excellent detail. Exciting information. You can own a copy of the original poster the same poster that will be used to advertise the FM Convention throughout the country The same slick stock The same vibrant color The fabulous rendering by FM's famous Ken Kelly This is a collector's classic you can't afford to miss out on Order now while the supply is available #2972 $1.50

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It came from beneath the sea. An aquatic bi-ped. The man-fish with gills. Terrifying air-breathing humans. When captured, the object of fear and loathing. Now revive the Creature from the Black Lagoon. Wear a 3/4 mask of the undersea menace. Green and black molded features make a fearsome impact on those who see it. The fluted gills add realism. Its red tinted lips seem to cry out for human blood. This mask will cover your entire face and the top of your head. An authentic Creature mask. #2574 $2.49

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He sits at his organ. And masked, he coaches a beautiful young singer. Eventually she rips off his mask, disclosing the skull-like, deformed face of Eric, the Phantom of the Opera. To be the Phantom, you must put on a mask! A frightening 3/4 mask that covers your entire face & top of your head. This ghastly, pale visage is molded from latex rubber. Dark-ringed sunken eyes glare out at you. Its teeth are bared in a malevolent grimace. The Phantom of the Opera mask. #2573/$2.49

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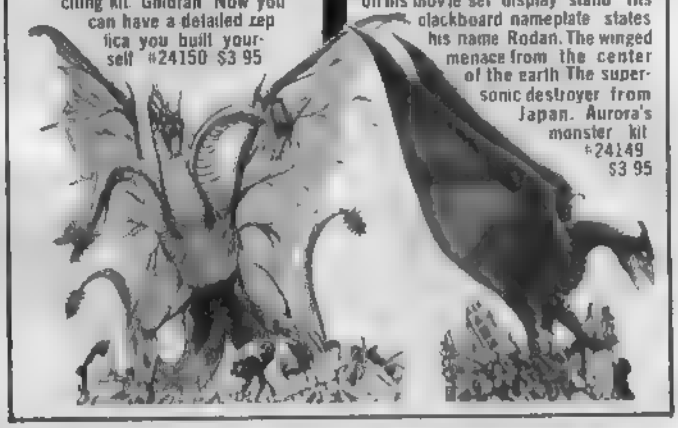
TWO NEW JAPANESE MOVIE MONSTER MODEL KITS!

RODAN & GHIDRAH

8-1/2 INCHES TALL! MOVING HEADS AND TAILS!

GHIDRAH, the triple threat monster from outer space. A fire breathing, wing-flapping scaled horror. His three flame-throwing heads make him thrice as dangerous! Now build your own three-headed horror with this Aurora hobby kit. The olive-colored heavy duty plastic pieces snap together to form a fierce, ferocious 8-1/2 inch tall monster. Intricately detailed and ready for action. Swiveling heads and tails create lifelike movement. Paint him. Fly him around your room. Or settle him on his movie set display stand with clackboard nameplate. A complete film history of the monster is included when you buy this exciting kit. Ghidrah. Now you can have a detailed replica you built yourself. #24150 $3.95

RODAN, one hundred tons of radioactive terror. Released from the bowels of the earth by an atomic blast, he flaps over the earth at twice the speed of sound. Science calls him a giant prehistoric monster. A pterodactyl with a wing-span of 500 feet. But could a pterodactyl raze cities with supersonic shock blasts? Earth's armies trace the menace to its breeding ground and destroy it. But now you can have an 8-1/2" replica of this winged marauder. And build it yourself. Just snap together the rust-colored, highly detailed pieces of heavy duty molded plastic. Follow the instructions. And soon, Rodan crouches before you on his movie set display stand. His clackboard nameplate states his name Rodan. The winged menace from the center of the earth. The supersonic destroyer from Japan. Aurora's monster kit. #24149 $3.95



COLLECTOR'S ISSUES OF SPACEMEN MAGAZINES

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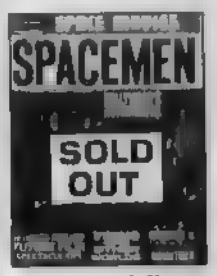

Continuation of Metropolis stills and story! King Kong vs. Godzilla! King of the Rocketmen serial! International s-f magazine covers! #1207 SPACEMEN #7 $3.00

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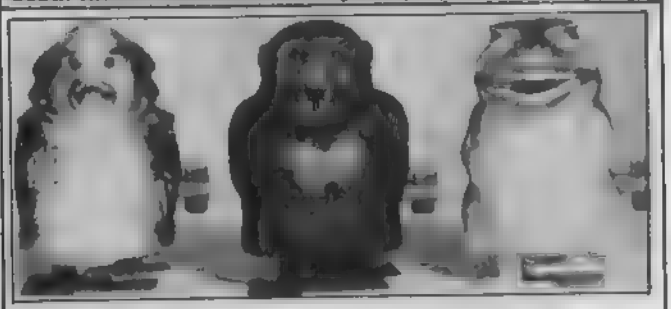
These sparking monsters will charm the pants off even the meanest sourpuss in your neighborhood. Just wind up the heavy-duty plastic walking dolls with the permanently attached keys and watch out! They march across the terrain breathing fire. Pit ferocious Rex Dinosaur against Mighty King Kong! Match King Kong with the wild Creature of the Black Lagoon! Painted in full color, the tough 3" tall bodies have coal-black eyes that peer out at you. So Beware! Even tho' the flint sparks can't harm you, your parents might steal these monsters so they can play with them alone!



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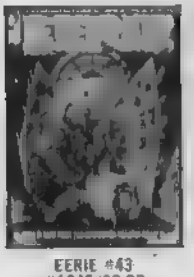
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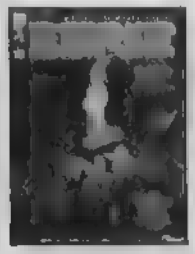
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